

The Pulpit.

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THE PULPIT.

SERMONS BY EMINENT LIVING MINISTERS.

VOLUME LV.

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THE PULPIT.

THE SEAL OF GOD.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. & REV. HENRY MONTAGU VILLIERS, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 24, 1848.

"In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."—Ephesians i. 13, 14.

THE apostle had opened this epistle with setting before the Ephesian church the one great cause of the salvation of man—namely, free and sovereign grace. He had shown that those who are saved were "predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." He points out, in the thirteenth verse, that they (the Ephesians) had trusted in Christ, from the time that they had heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; and then he adds—"In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;" setting before them a second step in the Divine life—the first being their receiving "the Gospel of their salvation," and the second being, that after they had thus received this Gospel they were "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."

I propose, therefore, inquiring this morning, first, what this sealing means; secondly, how long it is to endure; and then, lastly, who the parties are that are here said to be "sealed." And may the Spirit of God cause the Word spoken to be made useful to our souls, for Christ's sake!

I. First, then, what does this sealing mean?

It is quite clear that it is a figurative expression. Sometimes it denotes a mark set upon this or that, to show that it belongs to a particular family or person. Sometimes it has reference to a gift of affection,—and in this sense we find it used in the book of the Song of Solomon, where we read the request,

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." At other times it refers to security—as we also read in the Song of Solomon, where we are told that the church is "as a well that is sealed up"—that is, kept secure. Sometimes, again, the figure is used for an assurance or a testimony; in this sense our Lord uses it, when He says, "Ye have set to your seals that God is true."

Now if you take these various senses, and put them together, you will then, I think, have the idea which is intended to be conveyed by the passage before us, which we may sum up in one word, the assurance of God's love. This implies, that we are His and loved by Him—that we are in that sense distinguished from the world at large—that this love is free, unmerited, simply a gift of His affection—that it secures us and keeps us safe for ever; and it is in this way that the believer looks up and perceives his blessed state in the sight of God.

But observe, this assurance of God's love is not to be limited to the mere certainty that Jesus Christ died for sinners—that does not at all come up to this state of privilege, to which the text refers; it involves a knowledge of, and a personal interest in that death, which enables the believer to speak of the Saviour not only as being the Redeemer of the world, but as being that Saviour who (as the apostle said) "loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*." There is an individuality in it, if I may so express myself.

Then it implies also the assurance, that being thus sealed there will be a due supply of blessings to us of every kind. It is in this sense the apostle speaks, when he says—"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

And in connection with this, we have also the assurance of a right to heavenly glory. Of this the apostle speaks, in the fifth chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, and the first verse. He says—"We know"—there is no doubt in the mind upon the matter—"we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Now this assurance does not consist nor depend upon any external work or privilege. "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Nor does it depend even upon the full manifestation of the graces of the Holy Spirit: though at the same time you must bear in mind what is the pure and simple work of the Holy Spirit himself. We are "sealed with the Spirit of promise," we are told; either because this was the Spirit that was promised when our blessed Lord was about to leave His people, and concerning whom He declared that He would send to them the Comforter, to dwell with them for ever—or because it is by Him that all the precious promises of God's Word are brought home to the hearts of those who are anxious about their souls. And in this sense the apostle John speaks of the Holy Spirit, when he says, in the ninth verse of the last chapter of his first epistle—"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." There is the indwelling. Or, as the apostle Paul speaks of it, in the epistle to the Romans, when he says that "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

Now this sealing is for the most part unknown to any living creature besides ourselves. Thus in the book of Proverbs we read, "The heart knoweth its

own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddled not with its joy." Or still more plainly in the first epistle to the Corinthians, we are told, in the second chapter, that "no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him," but that God hath revealed to us "the things of the Spirit."

But although this security does not depend upon any outward privilege, nor upon any external manifestation of the graces of the Spirit, still the seal necessarily has an impression; that impression is the Divine image of Godhead himself, and will be made manifest in our lives. Thus, in the second epistle to Timothy you will recollect that there is a seal described as having two impressions, one on either side. In the second chapter you read—"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Therefore, every one who is thus sealed does, in fact, "depart from iniquity." Still, we must always endeavour to bear in our minds, that the sealing is founded not upon what we do, but upon God's pure and simple promise, which is "yea and amen in Christ Jesus."

But the apostle here describes this sealing as an "earnest" or pledge. It is (as it were) the first fruits; so that whatever follows will necessarily be of the same kind. If, therefore, this assurance of God's love is that of which we are allowed to taste in some measure now, we are to expect, that when we receive the inheritance, we shall have still greater enjoyment, still further knowledge of God's free gift of love towards ourselves.

II. But we must now inquire, how long this sealing is to endure. It is not to last for ever: we are told that we are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

Now this "purchased possession" must mean the whole body of believers, when they are risen at the time of the Resurrection, and also those believers who are found alive at the coming of the Lord; both together making that which is described in Scripture as "the church of the first-born." Then it is that the body and soul will be reunited, and we shall enter on the full enjoyment of everlasting happiness. I come to this interpretation by consulting the language of the apostle Paul, in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, where he tells us, at the twenty-third verse, that we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Now as we were saved, as far as the blood of Christ is concerned, long before this, the "waiting for the redemption of our bodies" must imply the waiting for the fruits of that redemption—the enjoyment of that which the redeeming blood has secured for us, even the establishment of our souls and bodies in heaven for ever and ever.

And what a blessed period is this, brethren, for those who are really anxious about their souls to look forward to! No opposition then from sin—no opposition from the ungodly who are without—not even any doubts in our minds as to whether we shall be saved or not; but then there will be full enjoyment of God and uninterrupted fellowship with Him.

Therefore, when we speak of this sealing of the Spirit, as "the earnest of the inheritance," it unfolds everything that concerns the comfort of a religious man, for it secures to him the indwelling of that Spirit continually; and it also unfolds the everlasting security of the saints, that they shall be preserved and

taken care of by God, and defended from sin and temptation; so that they may already speak as the heir of a large property may speak—that it will be his at the proper time. And this St. Paul teaches us, when he speaks of “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” So that while the inheritance is reserved in heaven for believers, God by His own Almighty power, by His sovereign grace, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, secures us, in order that we may be fitted to partake of that inheritance.

III. But we are to inquire, who are the parties that are thus sealed?

Now in the twenty-fifth Psalm we are told, that “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” None, therefore, will have the seal of God’s love who do not truly “fear Him.” And they are still more plainly described in the book of Revelation, the fourteenth chapter, where we are told, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” They are, then, the redeemed from among men. They are not all men, but they are those who are brought out from among men. And therefore it is, that this passage of Scripture does not bear upon the ungodly, or upon those who never think of their souls, but upon those whom God’s grace has separated from the world,—who have put aside all other things, in order that they may “seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.” “These are they which follow the Lamb;” “follow” Him in seeking to partake of His graces—“follow” Him, whose delight it was to do the will of His heavenly Father, saying, that it was “His meat and His drink” to do it. And we must also follow Him through suffering, for it is those who suffer with Him that shall reign with Him. These are the “first fruits;” because after “the church of the first-born” is completed, there will be further conversions, although others will not be admitted to similar privileges with “the church of the first-born.” These are they that are “without guile.” There is no hypocrisy, there is no hypocritical feeling, there is no hypocritical expression, there is no pretence of religion in them; but their hearts are laid open before God. They desire both to know the will of God and to do it.

Now having thus endeavoured to explain the passage, let me, my Christian brethren, try and bring it home to yourselves.

And first I would say, that it does not belong to unconverted, ungodly, and worldly men. It does not describe their condition; it describes the state of those who are really desirous of being the Lord’s people—who are not ashamed of His name, or ashamed of His work, or ashamed of His Word, but who honour them all, and show by their lives that they honour God. Now such persons know very well that they carry about with them a heart which is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” Therefore is it necessary for me to give you also the warning which the apostle gave to the church of Ephesus—“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed;” for be assured, that let your happiness, let your certainty of obtaining your inheritance be what it may, the slightest departure from the narrow road, will be attended with corresponding unhappiness, and you will be forced to cry again and again, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.”

At the same time, beloved, there will be many of you, who are really anxious about your souls, but who have never yet partaken of this enjoyment. Press forward, then, my brethren, in order that you may obtain it. Believe me, you require it, in the midst of the temptations by which you are surrounded. I put aside the occasions of worldly anxiety and grief for those near and dear to us, and pass on to that period which all will acknowledge to be the most solemn and awful on this side the grave. I mean, our dying bed. And what is it, that will give comfort then? I have often spoken with men who possessed a mere philosophical religion, when in health, and I have also spoken to them on their dying beds: and I have never found any to say that their philosophy gave them comfort at that hour—that they longed to see their Lord and their God—that “to them to live was Christ, and to die was gain.” Oh! my brethren, if there are any of you that are prepared to speak of the religion which is revealed in God’s Word as the mere effect of enthusiasm, as being that which is fitted for weak minds, and not suited for a manly intellect; let me now, while you have time to ponder, most earnestly and solemnly exhort you to cast aside such vain imaginations, and to show your wisdom by not pretending to be wiser than God, but to accept those doctrines which He himself has declared to be “the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation.” I know it is easy to make a jest of religious subjects; but how will that stand you, when you must appear before God, to give an account of all the things that you have done upon earth?

So again, let me remind you who are no infidels—who profess to believe the religion of Christ, but who show by your lives and your conversations that your hearts have never been weaned from the world, and have never yet been given unreservedly to God—I mean that class of persons who are always afraid of their religion carrying them too far—who are prepared to speak well of “a little religion,” and to make allowances for some going a little further than others, but who are never afraid of coming short of that which the Bible demands: let me now speak to you, my dear brethren, and tell you that that “lukewarm” religion, as the Bible describes it, is the very religion which the Saviour says He especially hates. There is no stronger expression in Scripture than that which the Saviour himself addressed to the church at Laodicea: “I would that thou wert cold or hot;” but because they were lukewarm He rejected them for ever. Oh! my brethren, tamper not, then, with that in which eternity is concerned; but if there are any here who are “halting between two opinions,” and who say, “I hope that it may be well with me at last,” but who neither hope nor care for this assurance of the Saviour’s love, let me entreat them, if they would be joyful in life, happy in death, and have a glorious assurance of everlasting life hereafter, to “come out and be separate, and to touch not the unclean thing;” for it is to such, and such only, that God has said—“I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters.”

But there are others, who are not of this character, but who are really serious and devoted Christians, and whose doubts and anxieties are known to none save their Saviour and their God, who looks into their hearts, who sympathises with every anxiety, who desires to comfort them, and who declares that He “will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” Let me encourage you also in seeking this assurance, even though you may not now possess it. Let me ask you, what does your anxiety mean? Does it mean an anxiety to live in sin, and yet have happiness? Or does it mean, that you cannot be

as perfect as you wish to be, and are therefore afraid to “ lay hold of the hope that is set before you in the Gospel ?” Let me remind you that your assurance is not to depend upon your sense of personal holiness, but upon the finished work of the Son of God ; it is not to depend on your being free from all sin, because there is no man on earth that is free from sin. “ If any man say that he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him.” Are you not striving to live more closely with God ? Who gave you that desire ? Who led you in any measure to overcome the world ? Who led you to that Saviour in whom you believe ? Be assured that all these things came from God himself ; and let me entreat you to follow the advice of His unfailing Word. Therefore, dear brethren, go on your way rejoicing ; “ looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.”

THE OUTCAST VIRGINS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. FRANCIS JACOX, B.A.

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH, WELLINGBOROUGH,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 1848.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.—Matthew xxv. 1, 2.

WHILE the Western world, in which we live, is characterized by prodigious changes and convulsions, which revolutionize both the depths and the surface of society, so that the cry is still, *onwards*,—there is in the East an adherence to old forms and customs that is strikingly opposed to our European tendencies. *Here* all is fretful, changing, restless—confusion is loved, not for its own sake, but for its promise of novelty; mingled together are elements of diverse orders, interests of distant kinds, efforts of warring factions; in the great furnace of “progress” these discordant matters are ever and anon fused into one compact mass, that exists under various aspects, until shaken and dissolved by the pressure from without of some aspiring claim. *There*—in the quiet retreats and broad savannahs of the East—where the swarthy shepherd feeds his flocks on the same plains once frequented perhaps by Jacob, the smooth man dwelling in tents, or by the son of Jesse—spending on grassy couch the livelong night, with eyes contemplative pondering the stars above him—contrasting the majesty and mystery of that gorgeous host with the littleness and weakness of his own race—till he vented his thoughts in psalmist-utterances, “When I consider the heavens the work of Thy hands, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou so regardest him!” Nor have the chief circumstances of Eastern life suffered much alteration since those ancient days. One of the most recent of writers on the manners of the Orientals, remarks, “Whether my journeyings have been on the banks of the Nile, in the city of Rameses, whence with a strong hand God brought forth His people Israel, or on the shores of the Indus; whether wandering on desert plains, or residing in Oriental cities,—the same fact has ever in its full power constrained my earnest observation—the fact that however the East may have been affected by changes of religion and dynasties, however it may have been rifled and enslaved by stranger powers, however its features of government and social ordinances may have been altered or modified by external and extraneous circumstances,—yet that, to a very remarkable and interesting degree, the manners and customs of the people remain unchanged during a period of more than three thousand years; so that, even in our day, the summit of Mount Sinai may still be noted by the pilgrim traveller to the

convent of St. Catharine, and the great wilderness may be now trodden by the foot of the Gentile, wherein the 'children of Israel murmured and wept;'—the traveller in the East may yet note in the ordinary life about him, acts, customs, manners, and prejudices in no way altered from what they were when Abraham ^{fed} his flocks on Mamre, when Shimei cursed David at Bahurim, and when the Saviour and His disciples walked with men in the Holy City." Conservatism is the badge of the East. Progress, of the West. And, so, whether we enquire about an Eastern festival, or a funeral, or a wedding, we shall find the main features identical, in the hand-book of the living tourist and in the venerable records of the oracles of God.

The parable now before us is founded on the customs attendant on a marriage among the Jews, and modern accounts amply prove the continuance of those observances which are here alluded to. Still are the same nuptial ceremonies kept up. Accompanied by his friends (called the children of the bride-chamber, the friends of the bridegroom), the bridegroom himself proceeds to the house of his betrothed, and escorts her with pomp and gladness to his own home. She is accompanied by her young friends and companions, (spoken of in Psalm xlv., as the virgins that be her fellows,) while others of these, the virgins of the parable, at some convenient place *meet* and join the procession, and enter with the rest of the bridal company into the hall of feasting. As the marriages in the East took place of old, and do still, at night, we understand the constant mention of lamps and torches carried by the friends and attendants. That the virgins should be ten in number is not accidental; this number formed a company, which a less number, according to the Jewish notions, would not have done. Thus it was ruled that wherever there were ten Jews living in one place, there was a congregation, and there a synagogue ought to be built.

The parables of our Lord have given scope, more perhaps than any other part of Sacred Writ, for the speculations of expositors. Discussions elaborate and wire-drawn have been entered into as to the meaning of each allusion, and the explanation of each agent and event. 'Who are the virgins?' 'why they are divided into fives?' 'why *all* slumbered and slept?' 'what is meant by the vessels?' 'what by the oil in the vessels?' 'what by those that sell?' and 'what by the going to buy of them?' these, and many others are questions upon which commentators exhaust their own ingenuity and their readers' patience. We do not propose a detailed investigation of the *minutiae* of the parable. Our object will be to gather a spiritual lesson from it—that lesson, we trust, which it was designed to teach. Thus much is plain—that of the ten virgins appointed to meet the bridegroom on his return from the wedding, five were foolish; that these five had not provided a sufficient stock of oil to last through the night, calculating, it seems, too hastily, that the bridegroom would come sooner than he *did* come—and that the melancholy consequence of this foolishness, this want of forethought, was, that these five were excluded from the banquet—since the guests arrived while they were in quest of fresh oil, and the doors were shut before they had time to get back. And the precept which Christ attaches to the recital of the parable is this; "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Let us take into consideration, first, wherein consisted the want or deficiency of the outcast virgins; secondly, the special lesson to ourselves

derived from the parable—namely, the duty of vigilance, of waiting on the coming of Christ.

I. All the ten virgins are, in outward profession, followers of the bridegroom. They are types and representatives of those who avow their creed in the *Te Deum* versicle, "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge;" who acknowledge the inspiration and magnify the import of Scriptures which teach a Second Advent, not in "great humility," but in "glorious majesty." All the ten go forth with lamps, and with oil, to meet the bridegroom. But five of them were foolish—improvident—unreflecting. It is not said they were wicked or depraved. The division is not into good and bad, but into wise and foolish. The position of wise hearers is described by St. Peter as that of persons who make progress in religion—who do as well as hear—work as well as love—act as well as feel—endure as well as enjoy; for he says, "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity. For if these things be in you *and abound*, they make you that ye shall be neither *barren nor unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Wherefore the rather brethren, *give diligence* to make your *calling and election sure*; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into His everlasting kingdom." And he describes the foolish in these words, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and *cannot see afar off*, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

It is not, then, that the five virgins who were at last shut out, were positively disloyal, or that they disliked the person of the bridegroom, and the terms of their vocation. Nothing of the kind. They were watchers; they had lamps; they had oil in their lamps. And it is not that the class of Christians they represent are opposed to godliness or are immoral, or are living in sin. Other parables symbolize such;—not this one. The class here meant are professors; waiting and watching professors; they have grace, they have a certain interest in religion and in religious services, and they are on the outlook for the Advent of the Redeemer. Alas! it is of such that we here read, the doors are shut. An unfortunate oversight has prevented their being on the spot just at the crisis of time. They come hurriedly up and knock, but it is too late. "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But He answers—"Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

"It is clear," observes an able divine, "that whatever is merely outward in the Christian profession is the lamp—whatever is inward and spiritual is the oil laid up in the vessels. When we contemplate with St. James the faith as the body, and the works as that which witnesses for an informing, vivifying soul, then the faith is the lamp, the works the oil in the vessels; but when on the other hand we contemplate with St. Paul the works as only having a value from the living principle of faith out of which they spring, then the works are the lamp, and the faith the oil which must feed it. Though in either case, before we have fully exhausted the meaning of the oil, we must get beyond both the works and the faith to something higher than either, the informing Spirit of God which prompts the works and quickens the faith, and of which Spirit, oil is ever in the Scriptures the standing symbol."

"We must remember," (to quote again from the same commentator,) "and it adds much to the solemnity of the lesson, that by the foolish virgins are meant, not hypocrites, not self-conscious dissemblers, much less the openly profane and ungodly; but the negligent in prayer, the slothful in mind, and all those whose scheme for a Christian life is laid out to satisfy the eyes of men, and not to please God who seeth in secret. Nor is it that they have actually no oil at all; they have some, but not enough; their lamps when they first go forth are evidently burning, else they could not speak of them as on the point of expiring just as the bridegroom was approaching. In fact the having no oil provided in the vessels, is exactly parallel to the having no deepness of earth; the seed springs up till the sun scorches it; the lamps burn on till their oil is exhausted through the length of the bridegroom's delay. In each case there is something more than a merely external profession, conscious to itself that it is nothing; besides, it is not that there was no faith, but that there was only that transient temporary faith that could not endure temptation, nor survive delay; the Christian life in manifestation, but not fed from deep internal fountains."

Mark, then, dear brethren, the want of the foolish virgins. They wanted depth of piety. What they had would not last through that long bleak night of expectancy. There *was* ballast in the ship, but not enough to keep it steady all through that rough sea. There *was* breath in the body, but not enough to sustain it in that sharp and continued wrestling. There *was* money in the treasury, but not enough to pay all the just debts and contingencies that were sure to, or that might be expected to arise. The virgins took oil, but only so much as would last till an early hour; if the bridegroom came then, just then, well and good; and they reckoned that he *would* come then; they rested on their estimation as probable and comfortable, and refused to annoy themselves with such vague and troublesome suppositions as—"But what if he should delay his coming?" There was discomfort in such hypotheses; so away with them, once for all! It was not pleasant to be harassed with possible evils, and imaginary accidents and supposable emergencies. They preferred taking things easily. They had oil. That satisfied them. How much? was another, and, they thought, an unnecessary question. As the saying is, they would take their chance.

The application is no difficult one. There are foolish virgins all the world over, and all the church over. You could not, by even a close examination, succeed always in detecting them, or in making their distinction from the wise. They stand together, foolish and wise, in one catholic body. They both are in the attitude of waiters, expectants, watchers; they both seem wistful for the midnight cry, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh." They both have the wedding garb—they both have their lamps burning. But in the case of the foolish, there is wanting that stanch principle of devotedness to God, which can bear the brunt of continued opposition and trial. They may have very warm feelings; but then their warm feelings (which they know sometimes droop,) may fail them just when wanted, and prove a broken reed just when their support is required. Warm feelings are not the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and therefore something else, something over and above, something independent on them, is absolutely needed. There must be a stock of grace. There must be not just a *superficies* of piety, but a succession of layers, strata upon strata. a substantial, massive, solid ground-

work, which shall last when the frail and the unreal is dissolved. We must build deep if we would build high. The house that towers upwards, story upon story, begirt with ponderous ornaments and florid appendages, must have deep foundations, and on no sandy ground. The Christian that stands waiting for Christ's coming, clad in bridal attire, with lamp of lustre bright, must be sound below as well as above, in principle as well as in feeling, in settled conviction and pious devotedness, as well as in those feelings which are the ornaments or appendages rather than the essentials of religion.

"Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also fall from your own steadfastness. But *grow in grace* and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The end of all things is at hand,"—hence, must we "be sober and watch unto prayer." "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

II. In conclusion: this parable impresses upon us the duty of vigilance. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

St. Augustine says, "We know not the last day, that we may watch every day." And he adds, what is still useful for our times, when theories and systems of prophetic interpretation are so manifold, so contradictory, and dogmatic in proportion to their speculativeness; "He that loves the day of the Lord is not the man who asserts that it is close at hand, nor he who asserts that it is still afar off; but rather it is he who, whether it be close at hand or whether it be afar off, expects it with sincerity of faith, with firmness of hope, with ardour of love." And we see force, brethren, in a suggestion made upon one expression in the parable, namely, that the bridegroom did actually tarry, a suggestion that this intimates that possibly the time of Christ's return might be delayed beyond the expectations of His first disciples. "It was a hint," says Professor Trench, "and no more; if more had been given,—if the Lord had plainly said that He would not come for many centuries, then the first ages of the church would have been placed in a disadvantageous position, being deprived of that powerful motive to holiness and diligence, supplied to each generation of the faithful, by the possibility of the Lord's return in their time. It is a necessary element of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, that it should be possible at any time,—that no generation should consider it improbable in theirs. The apostle (2 Peter iii. 12.) speaks of the faithful, not merely looking for, but also *hasting* the coming of the day of God; and elsewhere says—'Repent ye.....*that (in order that)* the times of refreshing may come. And we find the same truth, that the quicker or tardier approach of that time is conditional, declared in clearer terms. 'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' Agreeably to which passages we pray that it may please God to 'accomplish the number of His elect and to *hasten* His kingdom.'"

All the ten virgins are represented as sleeping. This seems to imply, not, we think, that the love of all had waxed cold; but that all, having taken

such precautions as they severally thought necessary, awaited the bridegroom in calm repose.

And while they slept, the voice suddenly broke that night-calm. The ear of the sleepers caught the cry, first faintly perhaps in the distance, and ever increasing and waxing stronger and stronger, as it drew nearer, and as fresh voices joined the throng of those that hastened to swell the procession. It is at midnight that deep sleep falls upon men; and we know that the day of the Lord so "cometh as a thief in the night." All the language of Scripture corroborates the doctrine of its unexpectedness, its unexpectedness even to the wise virgins. *They* are not unprepared, but they are, in some sense, taken by surprise. The practical thing, therefore, is to take care that we want nothing essential to that season—that we have oil in our lamps. A writer upon the Hindoos, describing the parts of a marriage ceremony in India, of which he was an eye-witness, uses these words—"After waiting two or three hours, at length near midnight it was announced as in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights and were unprepared, but it was too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward."

Too late! What a volume of misery in these little words! Despair is their key-note. Remorse, anguish, wringing bitterness of soul, nestle within them. Too late. Coming, indeed,—but when the procession has passed in. With oil—but when the bridegroom has taken his seat at the banquet table. Knocking—crying with familiar voice that he had heard before, "Lord, Lord, open unto *us*"—not to strangers, but to virgin attendants, "to *us*" who have waited so long. But the doors remain closed, and the pause is only broken by the stern, yet sad refusal. *Too late.*

Advent season leads, or should lead, the churchman's mind to that "second coming to judge the world," which results from the "first coming" to save it. They that have Christ's Spirit in reality, and look for His advent with earnest interest, are strangers and pilgrims here—and as such, are looking homewards, and saying, with low plaintive voice, perhaps, out of the depths, "I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say more than they that watch for the morning."

Followers of the Bridegroom, keep oil in your vessels;—

"Think not of rest; though dreams be sweet,
Start up, and ply your heaven-ward feet;—
Is not God's oath upon your head,
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed,
Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call?"

The watching shall then be changed into the resting; the militant shall merge in the triumphant. "Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

VAIN THOUGHTS OF THE PAST.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, CAMBERWELL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 31, 1848.

"Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."—Eccles. vii. 10.

WHAT a year has that just expiring been! Are times still more disastrous in store, so that we shall ever have to look back on 1848, and speak of former days as better than the present? The whole civilised world shaken to its foundations; ancient monarchies upset; kings driven into exile, rebellion the rule, not the exception; pestilence let loose; property in many places a mere shadow of what it was. Say ye, who, with those reproved in the text, are fond of contrasting what is with what was, and magnifying the latter at the expense of the former, do ye expect to live to speak of 1848 as better than some coming year? It may be so. England has yet been most mercifully dealt with. She has been sheltered in the hollow of the Almighty's hand: erect, amid the desolations of Europe, and experiencing only in the most mitigated degree the calamities which have brought down to the ground the noblest and the proudest of her competitors. And if we show not ourselves duly sensible of our national mercies; if we labour not more and more at the remedying the evils in our social system—relieving, instructing, elevating the dense masses of our poor—indeed it may come to pass, that still darker days will lour upon England, and we shall experience in far deeper and intenser bitterness the woes that have gone forth to lay waste the earth.

But we will quit these considerations for the present. Enough, to have reminded you of the peculiar character of the year on whose last day we meet—of the especial motive which there is in the events of that year to the liberal prosecution of such plans of benevolence as that which I have undertaken to advocate. We will now give our undivided attention to the text. We shall afterwards have occasion for recurring to the topics on which we have thus briefly touched.

You must all be aware what a softening power there is in distance; how often an object, on which we gaze with great delight whilst beheld afar off, will lose its attractiveness when it is brought near. Every admirer of the natural landscape is conscious of this. As he gazes on some glorious spreading of scenery, he knows there is much that would not bear the being examined in detail—which, however beautiful or picturesque as surveyed from an eminence, would prove coarse or unsightly on closer inspection. There is much the same power in distance with regard to what we may call the moral landscape. For instance, when friends are with us, and we are mingling in the varied intercourses of life, we are aware of defects and inconsistencies, of inequalities of temper, or asperities of manner, which are often mingled with the most amiable qualities. But when the grave has closed upon them, and we can

contemplate them only by looking back, we rapidly forget what we saw displeasing and repulsive, and we come to have no impression but one of unfeigned though melancholy admiration.

This, however, is not all that may be said. In place of speaking merely of the characters of friends, and arguing that there is a power in distance of softening those characters, and causing the harsh features to disappear, we might contend that we are inclined to look with a favourable eye upon past times; so that upon the landscape, if we may so express it, of a bygone century, there will vanish in a great degree all base and misshapen things, and there will settle upon that landscape a kind of golden halo, giving indistinctness to what offends the eye, and greater prominence to all on which it can rest with approval. It is not to be questioned, that much which has been viewed by contemporaries with dislike or dissatisfaction, is regarded by posterity with feelings of admiration—that actions, which at the moment of performance appeared harsh and unwarrantable, have a noble and heroic air when viewed in the glass of history. This is partly to be accounted for by the acknowledged fact, that the fashions and prejudices of the parties into which society is almost unavoidably divided, interfere with anything like just judgment of conduct and motive; so that it is only by those who stand at a distance, and have no share in the intrigues and jealousies of the times, that a sound decision is likely to be reached. If, however, it were only the softening power of distance which had to be taken into the account, it might be necessary to caution men against judging without making due allowance for this power; but we should hardly have to charge it upon them as a fault, that they looked so complacently on what was far back. But from some cause or other men become disgusted with the days in which their lot is cast, and they are prone to the concluding that the past days were better. And here comes into play the precept of our text—a precept which, like all other Scriptures, we believe, is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

We would first point out to you, that there is an apparent strangeness in the precept, inasmuch as it seems to forbid that study of the past which may enrich us from the experience of our forefathers, which may restrain us from searching into the causes why former days were better than these, and thus appears to close against us those sources of information which lie so abundantly in the annals of history. But it is very evident that this could not have been the meaning of Solomon, for this would have been in direct contradiction to other statements of Scripture. If, indeed, it were ascertainable truth, “that the former days were better than these,” you may be sure that it would never be a forbidden occupation, that of investigating the reasons; but what we understand the wise man to affirm is, the falsehood of the assumption of the superiority of past days; he denies the fact, and therefore demonstrates the folly of labouring to discover the cause. He may be considered as allowing the likelihood that the past days appear superior to the present, just as remote scenes are softened by distance; but he must be equally considered as asserting, that the superiority is only in appearance, attributable, as we have seen, to optical deception, or jaundiced feeling; and the great point, therefore, which is submitted to our consideration is, that of the falseness of the supposition, “that the former days were better than these.” We believe the supposition to be false in every point of view, though we shall only treat it so far as religion is concerned. To quote the words, but recently published, of a brilliant modern historian: “The more carefully we examine the history of the past, the more reason shall we find to dissent from those who imagine that our age has been fruitful of new social evils. The truth is, that the evils are, with scarcely an exception

old. That which is new, is the intelligence which discerns them, and the humanity which relieves them." But we shall speak only of the religious advantages of the different times, endeavouring to prove "that the former days" were not "better than these." It will of course become us, in treating such a point, to confine ourselves, as much as may be, to what is personal and practical, and to give our illustrations a bearing on our own immediate case.

With this object in view, we must endeavour to show you, in the first place, upon general principles, that the present days must be very like the past; and then to examine, in the second place, into certain plausible arguments through which men might reach an opposite conclusion.

I. Now it ought to be carefully observed in regard of human nature, that it did not grow corrupt by degrees, but became all at once as bad as it was ever to be. You are not to think, that through Adam's transgression, human nature became to a certain extent evil, and that afterwards it gradually deteriorated till it reached its lowest point of depravity. It reached that point at one step. When it fell, it fell the whole length down which it could ever descend, and became instantly capable of every crime and every atrocity which can now be committed in the old age of the world. There are few things more worthy of being pondered than this. There is a disposition towards extenuating the effects of the first sin, as though they had not been very monstrous and fatal. The sin is represented as inconsiderable, and the consequences are explained away, if not altogether denied. But if the first sin were only the eating of an apple, almost the second sin was the murder of a brother. So vitiated, so abandoned did human nature instantaneously become, that a crime which even now confounds by its enormity, and the report of the commission of which will send a thrill of horror through a neighbourhood, and almost through a country, was perpetrated in the very infancy of wickedness, when the paradise of God had been but lately lost, and perhaps within sight of its glorious enclosure. It is not, then, that our nature passed from bad to worse, and that the human heart went through one state after another of depravity till it could justly be characterized by such a description as that given by the prophet, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Mysterious as it may seem, the matter of fact appears clearly to have been, that the corruption of human nature was not a work of time, but the work literally of a moment—that the being who had been formed in the very image of his Maker, became instantly capable of the most heinous of crimes; and so far was our nature from requiring a long familiarity with wickedness, in order to the being able to commit it in its most atrocious shape, that well nigh its first essay after apostatising from God was one which still fills us with horror, notwithstanding our daily acquaintance with a thousand foulnesses. And having thus shown itself, in the person of Cain, capable of the worst crimes, our nature went on to prove that this was no solitary instance, but that it was corrupt to the very core in the whole mass of men. You will all remember in how short a time the earth was completely overrun with wickedness, so that God used the striking expression, "It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth," and proceeded to the taking a tremendous vengeance, by bringing a flood upon the globe, which swept away all but eight of the guilty population. There is therefore no room whatsoever for the supposition, that human nature has grown gradually the worse, more depraved and more dissolute. The whole strength of evidence bears the other way. Sin was never an infant; it was a giant in the very birth; and forasmuch as we should have had precisely the same evil nature whensoever we had lived, it would be very hard to show that any former period would have been better

for us than the present. You may fix upon a time when there was apparently less of open wickedness, but this would not necessarily have been a better time for individual piety. The religion of the heart perhaps flourishes most when there is most to move to zeal for the insulted law of God. Or you may fix upon a time when there was apparently less of misery; but we need not say, that this would not necessarily, and not even probably, have been a better time for yourselves as Christians, seeing that confessedly it is amidst the deepest sorrow that the strongest virtues are produced. So that if a man regard himself as a candidate for immortality, we defy him to put his finger on an age of the past in which, as compared with the present, it would necessarily have been more advantageous for him to have lived. And if in speaking of better days you mean rather to speak in the popular and worldly sense of the term, designing by "better days" days of more universal peace and prosperity, we contend that you ought never to institute a comparison between what is matter of history and what is matter of experience. You have no power of judging between the two. What you feel, and what you read of, can never be so balanced that you can accurately decide on which side is the preponderance: and it must always therefore be a dangerous speculation whether the sum of happiness in past ages be greater or less than in the present. You may indeed say that there was more or less of war—that there was more or less of famine—that there was more or less of pestilence; but the question is not settled by settling the amount of outward evil. God is wont to be more abundant in consolation and in the appointment of counterbalancing circumstances, when there is most of manifest calamity. Before, then, you can decide the precise amount of happiness at a given period of time, you must make a computation for which you have not the elements, and which must therefore end in conjecture. You may, indeed, fasten on some period which appeared fraught with peculiar disadvantages; but those disadvantages are softened by distance, and perhaps even, as we said before, seem to heighten the general effect, by causing a finer distribution of light and shade. And have we not, then, good warrant, on the general principles thus briefly laid down, for contending for the falseness of the supposition, "that the former days were better than these?" It is the mere dream and fable of poetry, that there was ever such a thing as a golden age to this creation, at least since man transgressed. The heart of man has been, in every age, equally corrupt, and the government of God equally merciful and equally impartial; the grand sources of happiness and unhappiness have never undergone change, and therefore we can have no right as rational and accountable creatures to suppose that we should have been better off had our lot been cast in any former period. Away, then, with that repining in which men are wont to indulge, that the times are grown fearfully worse, offering greater causes for misery or greater obstacles to piety than existed in certain days to which they look back with regret. I know not whether or not what they account greater causes exceed those of former ages in magnitude; but of this I can be confident from the known course of God's dealing, that if there be greater causes for misery there are deeper springs of comfort—that if greater be the obstacles, greater are the assistances to piety. And the old may speak feelingly to the young of the better state of the times when they themselves were in their youth; and the young may dwell admiringly on some bright page of history, thinking that had they lived when such a champion witnessed for truth, or such a hero fought for liberty, or such a glory rested on the land, they would have had ample opportunities for becoming wiser or happier or more illustrious; but we affirm to the old and to the young, that they are cherishing a delusion, or rather upholding a falsehood; and we address each of them in the

words of the text—"Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

II. Now we are quite aware that this general statement does not exactly meet the several points which will suggest themselves to an inquiring mind; but we propose next to examine certain of the reasons which might be likely to lead men to a different conclusion from that which is stated to us in our text. We must here again narrow our field of inquiry, and confine ourselves to points in which we, as Christians, have an especial and a separate interest. When thus limited, the question under debate will be, whether it would have been more advantageous for us in our spiritual capacity, to have lived at an earlier period of Christianity. Would any former days have been better days for us, estimating the superiority by the superior facilities for believing the Christian religion, and acquiring Christian character? In attempting to answer such a question, we must bring under separate consideration the evidences and the truths of our holy religion.

Now there is a very common, and perhaps a very natural, feeling with regard to the evidences of Christianity—that they must have been much stronger and clearer, as presented to those who lived in the times of our Lord and of His apostles, than as handed down to ourselves through a long succession of witnesses. Many, and perhaps some of you, are disposed to imagine, that if with their own eyes they could see miracles wrought, they should have a proof on the side of Christianity, far more convincing than any which they actually have—that there would be no room whatsoever for a lingering doubt, if they stood by a professed teacher from God, whilst he stilled the tempest, or raised the dead. Here, as they think, is a clear and important respect in which "the former days were better than these." And they seem to have armed themselves with a reason, which they direct to the overthrow of all our preceding arguments. But that there is a fallacy in the reasoning, ought to be clear from the fact, that thousands who saw the miracles of Christ, were not convinced by them of the truth of His pretensions. It must be idle to think that the beholding a miracle would necessarily scatter all doubt, and overcome all unbelief, when it is notorious that the great mass of the Jewish people remained obstinately infidel, although there had been wrought in their presence the most amazing of wonders. And, indeed, only think of it; why should such superior power be supposed to reside in the seeing a miracle? The only thing to be assured about is, that the miracle has been wrought. There are two ways of gaining this assurance: the one is by the testimony of the senses—the other is by the testimony of competent witnesses. The former, the testimony of the senses, is granted to the spectator of the miracle—but only the latter, the testimony of witnesses, to those who are not present at the performance. But shall it be said that the latter must necessarily be less satisfactory than the former? Shall it be said, that those who have not seen the thing, are necessarily less sure of it than those who have? Shall it be said, that those who have not visited Constantinople, cannot be as certain that there is such a city, as those who have visited it? This is idle talking. The testimony of witnesses may be every jot as conclusive as the testimony of our own senses. I may be quite as sure of a thing which I have only heard of, as of a thing which I have seen—of a fact stated in history, as of a fact occurring before my eyes. You may call it credulity to believe, because numbers, whose veracity you cannot impeach, have combined in one consistent statement; but we retort the charge, and call it credulity to believe that these numbers are unworthy of belief. It is not the believer in the miracles of Christianity, who

is the credulous man; it is the unbeliever—for it needs far greater facility and far larger capacity of belief to embrace the supposition, that all the testimony on the side of these miracles is false, than that the miracles themselves were actually wrought. We will not, therefore, for a moment admit that we are disadvantaged by being placed at a distance from the commencement of Christianity; we contend, that there is such an unbroken chain of witnesses between the actual spectators of the miracles and ourselves, who stand in the last days of the world, that whoever will follow it link by link, may as thoroughly certify himself, and on grounds as sufficient, of the facts, that Christ healed the sick, and cast out demons, as if centuries were annihilated, and he stood side by side with the wonder-working Being. Though even if we were forced to concede, that the spectator of a miracle has necessarily an advantage over those to whom the miracle travels down in the annals of history, still we should be far from allowing that there is less evidence now on the side of Christianity, than was granted to the men of some preceding age. Let it be, that the evidence of miracle is not so clear and powerful as it was; what is to be said of the evidence of prophecy? Who will venture to deny, that as century has rolled away after century, fresh witness has been given to the authenticity of the Bible, by the accomplishment of the predictions involved in its pages? The stream of evidence has been like that beheld in mystic vision by Ezekiel, when waters issued from the eastern gate of the temple. At first, and for a time, that stream was inconsiderable; the waters were only to the ancles of the beholders; but rapidly did the stream deepen, until there were waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. Every age has made its contribution—the farther the river has flowed, the deeper has it become. What, then, if the testimony for miracle weaken in proportion to the distance of time from its performance? have we not in the midst of us a standing miracle—a miracle perpetually wrought—even the turning, (oh! more wondrous than the turning of the water into wine)—the turning of prophecy into history? Vary the illustration, and we may safely say that Christianity has enthroned herself on the spoils of time—that no age has passed without bringing its tribute, and laying it submissively at her feet.

We cannot content ourselves with arguing, that past days are not better than present; we would go further, and claim for the present superiority over the past. We are bold to affirm, that those who heard the Christian religion from the lips of apostles, and saw it confirmed by their miracles, had nothing like that accumulated evidence on the side of the faith, which is accessible to ourselves in the old age of the world. Scepticism was more excusable, for belief was more difficult, whilst the religion was new, though wonders heralded and encircled it, than now that it is ancient, and its very antiquity, though it has often had to live as a spark on the waters, is a sufficient demonstration that God was its Author. Yes, the Christian religion now reveals mightier proofs, than when it first had to battle with the superstitions of the world. Its own protracted existence, its own majestic triumphs, witness for it with a voice far more commanding than that which was heard, when its first preachers spoke to the dead, and were answered by their starting into life. Its accomplished predictions—Jerusalem still trodden down by the Gentiles—the Jews still dispersed, hither and thither, mingled with every people, and yet everywhere distinct—the rise and spread of Mahometanism—the corruptions of the Papacy—all these are witnesses to its authenticity, and attest the divinity of its origin: and that too with a testimony which could not be exceeded if the heavens were crowded with wonders, and the earth heaved with prodigies. Away, then, with the thought of those who fancy they would

have been satisfied with the evidences of Christianity, had they been born when it was first promulgated on the earth. We come down upon the man who is complaining of the want of sensible trophies—who is excusing a disposition towards scepticism, by pleading that there is no testimony which his senses can appreciate—we come down upon him with the charge that he is forgetting what belongs to him as a rational creature, when he thus puts a slight on the evidence of witnesses; and then with the demonstration, that there is an array of proof left on the side of Christianity, far outshining that which was displayed when apostles and apostolic men raised the standard of the cross, and bade the world do homage. And thus we consider ourselves warranted in pressing upon him the injunction of the text—"Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

But enough on the notion that "the former days were better than these," in regard of the superior evidence afforded to the truth of Christianity. There is another point to be considered. If "the former days" did not furnish greater facilities for believing the Christian religion, did they not for acquiring Christian character? We are sometimes disposed to contrast the Christianity of the present day with that of the past, and to pronounce it meagre and dwarfish in the comparison. We look with a kind of awe and wonder upon men who gladly gave up everything for religion, whom danger could not daunt, whom death itself could not terrify, but who in the face of the worst forms of persecution held fast their profession and kept unsullied their loyalty to the Saviour. When we compare such men with ourselves, too often inclined to murmur at the very least sacrifice and to shrink from the very least peril in the cause of our God and Redeemer, the natural and in some sense the just feeling is, that the times have grown worse, less favourable to individual piety, to the nurture of those graces which should distinguish the Christian; and it scarcely, perhaps, admits of doubt that there was piety of a higher order, a more generous and uncalculating devotedness to God, in seasons when the church was vehemently assaulted from without, than in days such as these when the secular power is engaged to support Christianity. But nevertheless we are far enough from being disposed to allow that the times to which we refer were necessarily more adapted than the present for the developing of Christian principles and the perfecting of Christian graces. We have so thorough a belief in the sameness of human nature and the accuracy with which God apportions the supplies of the Spirit to the emergencies of the human condition, that we can never regard it as owing to a difference in the times that there is a difference in the piety. Ay, and we can go further than this, and express our full confidence that amid all that is bewailed as the degeneracy of the age there is a vast deal of staunch and sterling religion—religion which, if there have been yet no menaces to call out its energies, would show more and more of the power of resistance as persecution grew bolder and bolder, till at length the sword might be drawn without turning it pale, and the fires be lighted without making it blench. I for one have no share in the common persuasion, that a season of persecution would be a season of apostacy. I know well enough that the mere nominal Christian would not be proof against the terrors of martyrdom—I know well enough that even where the Christianity is not merely nominal, some would be found too little grounded in the truth and too weak in faith to confess it at the stake and at the scaffold; but I know also that there are Christians in our cities and in our villages, who have in them all the elements out of which martyrs and confessors were made. They may not, even to themselves, be conscious of those elements—they may

not feel as though they could be ready with a smile upon the cheek and a song upon the lip to advance towards the death to which a tyrant had doomed them; but this is only because they are not doomed to martyrdom and because God apportions His grace to existing and not to prospective trials. Let the trial be that of martyrdom, and the grace would be that of martyrdom; so that we should again have the magnificent spectacle of those who had thought themselves timid, and who in a day of peril had feared that their constancy would not be proof against trial, displaying a heroism and a patience which struck wonder into foes and almost forced the savage executioner to fall down and worship them as something more than human. I do not feel as the traveller who has left behind him the mighty monuments of another generation, and who lingers on the last eminence from which a view may be gained, that ere he pass into another scene less haunted by the memory of greatness, his eye may again rest on the towering pillar or the enormous pyramid. I rather feel as though I stood on a spot, which, if it do not actually present those colossal insignia, would be rapidly covered with them if there came times like those in which the pillar and the pyramid were painfully reared. Tyrants might rise, and turn its cities into ruins, its fertile plains into a barren wilderness, and there would again be a Palmyra and a Tadmor in the desert, and future travellers would look wondrously on the innumerable fragments of the present Christian church, as we now do on those of the past.

We do not, then, agree with the common supposition, that the piety of our day would not stand the ordeal of persecution. Had martyrs lived in our times, they would have been the gentle, humble, zealous, self-denying believers, of whom, blessed be God, there is yet a goodly company in the land; and these believers would have been the martyrs, had they lived in times when the profession of pure Christianity exposed men to death. It is not, strictly speaking, that circumstances make moral heroes—for such may martyrs be called—it is that God gives men grace proportioned to the circumstances in which they are placed; so that he who is the meek and quiet Christian in the day of peace, would have braved the stake in the day of battle; and he who defied tortures in the season of persecution, might have been the gentle and retired character in a season of tranquillity.

“The former days,” then, were not “better than these.” Satan was as powerful; sin was as powerful; the mercy-seat did not stand more open than to-day; Christ did not plead with greater persuasiveness; the Spirit did not strive with greater energy. If you are not eminent in Christian graces now, you would never have been. It is not climate which makes the spiritual plant flourish; or, rather, God provides that it shall be our own fault if it do not always flourish equally. When persecuted, we may be, as it were, in a hot-house; but there may be as much of warmth in the clear summer’s sun, when persecution is succeeded by peace. Let no man, then, ascribe it to the times that he is inferior in faith, or zeal, or love, to the worthies whose bright names light up the story of the past. Let no man think to excuse his deficiencies by pleading that there is less to produce Christian excellence and call out Christian virtues. Of this I am confident, that there can be no reason why the Christian of the present day should not be as holy as the Christian of any preceding day; and holiness is the root of the matter. Its manifestation may at one time be the courage of the martyr, at another the integrity of the tradesman; but the difference in the manifestation only corresponds with the difference in the season, and the holiness itself may be equally genuine in the two cases, and equally great. What then? I would obey to the letter the injunction of Solomon in the text; I would never look back with regret to

past days, as though fancying that I might then have enjoyed better opportunities, and greater facilities for acquiring Christian character. Nay, and more than this : I could make it cause of thankfulness that my lot was not cast in earlier times. In place of thinking that it might have been better for me had I lived in earlier days, I would praise the Lord that I live when so many centuries have bequeathed to us their rich legacies of experience. It ought to make me more hopeful, more confident for the future, that there is so much in the past on which to rest, and from which to draw lessons. Martyrs and confessors ! for us they struggled, for us they died. Worthies of the olden time ; men, each like the sun going down in his brightness, and throwing gorgeously the gold and the vermilion over the whole circle of the horizon—for us were they illustrious in their life, and for us were they glorious in their death. The cloud of witnesses—that cloud which is as a pillar of fire to wanderers in the wilderness—has been continually on the increase ; and now, in the old days of the world, it has a depth and a luminousness which should make us grateful that we had so many precursors in the path we have to tread. I do feel it an immeasurable privilege, that we live in days when God's course of dealing with the righteous has been ascertained to us by a long line of witnesses. Others may exult that they were not born when philosophy was in its infancy, when the arts and sciences had scarcely struggled into life ; but that they took their places on the theatre of this earth, when men of mighty grasp had busied themselves with the secrets of nature, and so opened them up as to enlarge immeasurably human knowledge and human comfort ; and there is no reason why as Christians we should be insensible to this advantage. It is something, it is much, even if you think not of the light which science as it marches is ever shedding on the works and word of God—it is much that we live in days when the stars had been made familiar things to men, when the elemental powers had been subjected to human bidding, and mysteries which not only baffled but appalled an earlier generation, have resolved themselves into appliances for helping on our purposes. But the Christian's privilege goes far beyond this. The latter day is more precious to him, not so much because of the multiplied achievements of the astronomer, the wonderful discoveries of the chemist, or the gigantic triumphs of the engineer, as because he can send back his gaze over a longer line of the church—a line thronged at every point with beckoning forms, which show him the heavenly path, and tell him its nature, as well as its end. I regret not, then, that I lived not in days when (though probably this is but imagination) there was less of open impiety than at present, and apparently more to encourage to a life of righteousness. If I dared to have a wish, it would be, to have been born later in the world. It is for future times, not for past, that we should long. Privileged to live when there are harbingers of Christ's second coming, who would not desire to witness that august event with which stands associated whatsoever is brilliant in the history of creation ? Yet there is no need for such a wish as this. We have the apostle's express assurance, that they which are alive, shall not prevent (or take precedence of) those that are asleep. Then, if we be but the true and faithful followers of Christ, we shall have share in all the glories of the future. Come the magnificence of the descent !—come the pomp of judicature !—come the renovation of the earth !—the grave shall not hide these wonders from our view : the trumpet will have been sounded, and the dead in Christ are to “ rise first.”

Thus has God so graciously arranged His dealings with His church, that no generation of Christians has cause to look with anything like envy, either, on the past or on the future. The past is the treasure-house of experience

which we cannot wish diminished—the future, of glories, in which the men of all ages may equally share. And, therefore, live when we may, it would argue want of faith to wish that it had been appointed to us to live in yet later times—want of gratitude and of the sense of some of our best privileges to suppose “that the former days were better than these.”

And to go one step further, I must detain you a moment longer. Past days better than present? Future days worse than present? God forbid! We must labour at the preventing this. It may be so, it must be so, if we grow remiss in works of Christian benevolence. If, for example, we make no adequate effort to improve the condition of the dense masses of our poor—if we strive not to enlighten the ignorance of those masses—to impart to them a knowledge of God and of His Christ, they must become more and more hardened and depraved, till at length pressing on the country as an intolerable burden, they deaden all its energies and darken all its hopes. Then, indeed, might there be cause for looking back with regret at the days that are past. But this could arise only from our own faithlessness and negligence; and I am sure, you, for your part, will not be thus criminal. In this poor and populous neighbourhood you have long been energetic—energetic up to your ability—energetic, I might almost say, beyond your ability, in the work of Christian education; and you intend, I know it, God helping, to persevere. I have not returned to this church, after many years’ absence, to find cause for saying, “that the former days were better than these.” I shall not find you less active, less liberal, less self-denying than you were; and I trust I shall not find the richer part of the parish less ready to lend you a helping hand. This cutting off of districts from an overgrown parish is an excellent thing, so far as the extension and concentration of pastoral superintendence is concerned; but it may be a grievous and distressing thing if so managed that the mass of wealth remains to the old parish, and the mass of pauperism is thrown on the new. The only way of meeting such an emergency is that the old should still remember the new, and assist it by its bounty in grappling with the difficulties which itself has entailed. And if Christian education be liberally and prayerfully carried on, so that the rising generation of the poor grow up in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” oh! never fear that darker days may be in store for the land. There will be more of Christ in the minds of the people—of “Christ the way, the truth, and the life”—of Christ “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;” and with more of Christ, there must be more of all that gives dignity and security to a State, fixedness to our institutions, and happiness to our homes.

Yes, the year is all but gone, with its joys, its sorrows, its fears, its hopes. Another year is about to commence. I cannot unrol it—I cannot pierce it. If I could, who doubts I should see funerals moving from many of your doors? But let us conclude the year with a noble free-will offering to the Lord. Let not poor children cry to you in vain. Give liberally towards training them in the faith and the fear of the Redeemer; and then you will have done much to provide, nay, rather, to ensure, that the coming year, whatever its events, shall be blessed with the blessing of the Lord God of hosts. In place of there being cause for any who look on us to inquire why “former days were better than these,” all who behold us shall exclaim, “happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

WISDOM JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. W. C. LE BRETON, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. OLAVE'S CHURCH, SOUTHWARK,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, DEC. 24, 1848.

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."—Matthew xi. 16—19.

It is because I believe that even in the present day there is a generation whom our Lord might describe in the very same language in which He speaks of the one, to whom He and John the Baptist addressed their admonitions without effect, that I have selected the words just read to you for your consideration this morning. For like those who, when the stern preacher in the wilderness reproved them for their iniquities, found fault with the severity of his doctrines and the rigour of his life, are there not some among us who disobey the calls to self-denial and the crucifixion of our wicked lusts and passions, which occur in many passages of Scripture, and which are, as at certain seasons more particularly, whether of the ecclesiastical year, or of our spiritual estate, enforced upon our attention? Or, again, are there not others, who, after the manner of the accusers of the Redeemer, put the worst misconstruction that they are able to devise upon the innocent amusements and relaxations of the Christian, or betray the utmost apathy and indifference themselves upon occasions of evangelical mirth for blessings bestowed by Him upon the undeserving family of man? Yet it is cheering to recollect that all do not thus of a perverse faithlessness resist the sobering or enlivening influences of the Gospel, but that there is an elect people of God who can turn to the Lord with all their heart, at one time with fasting and with weeping and with mourning, at another with joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Of these, her true "children," it is, that "Wisdom is justified." By their conduct they prove the exquisite adaptation to the regenerate nature of man of those eternal counsels of the Almighty, which, partly by plaintive, partly by jubilant strains, seek to disturb and dissipate the malignant enchantments of the evil spirit. By their conduct, moreover, they show that to be sorry for sin is the way to receive sure and abiding comfort—seeing that it is appointed unto such to have given unto them "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" whereas, none who are carnally minded can either be merry when a festive solemnity is kept, or sorrow to repentance and godly edification when a fast is sanctified, and "Spare Thy people, O Lord! and give not Thine heritage to reproach," is the prayer of the priests and ministers of the Lord.

There are three divisions under which I shall endeavour to arrange the materials of thought I have briefly hinted at. They are, first, the singular unreasonableness of persons who have not faith; secondly, the calumnies which they spread against religion and its friends; thirdly, the ample vindication of "Wisdom's ways" by Wisdom's offspring.

I. First, we would advert to the singular unreasonableness of persons who have not faith; how that neither prosperity nor adversity, neither health nor sickness, neither the terrors nor mercies of Revelation, can prevent them from neglecting the offers of salvation.

Let us dwell awhile upon this fact. An abundance of the world's goods, we affirm, does not, in the case of the natural man, induce him to glorify and extol the bountifulness of his Maker. Favour is shown to him, and felt by him, but the Source from which it comes is not recognized and acknowledged; mercies new every morning spring up around his path, but they fail to incline his heart towards Him who is their Almighty Parent and Dispenser. A sense of being freed from much of that anguish and distress which his poorer brethren are exposed to, day by day recurs to his notice and experience; but He who made him to differ is nevertheless forgotten, or, at least, lightly esteemed. Why is this? Why is it that his soul answers not to the fair music? and why is it that he refuses to hear the voice of the wise and mighty Charmer? Why, but because sin has vitiated his faculties, so that they can no longer apprehend the harmony of heaven, nor vibrate to its gracious and exhilarating minstrelsy? why, but because he is still as one of those children, who, when their fellows piped to them, were unwilling to dance, despite the soft and animating sweetness of the air? We will imagine him, however, on the contrary, to be in need and distress; now, then, that he is removed from the fascinations of wealth and the splendours of opulence, will he, think you, be more disposed to embrace the glad tidings of reconciliation, which can render the most indigent rich, the most afflicted happy? Alas! no. He laments not to the notes of mourning which fill his habitation; or, if he lament at all, it is with the lamentation of the world, which "worketh death"—not with the lamentation of true piety, which "worketh salvation, not to be repented of." Bear this in mind, my friends, that you are in error when you suppose either that affluence or penury will furnish you with a love for or dependence upon God. Say not, 'If my time were more at my own disposal—if I moved in a lower or less moneyed rank of society—if I had not the temptations to live luxuriously, and fare sumptuously, by which I am at present surrounded, I would then fear God and keep His commandments.' No; for if comforts, conveniencies, and pleasures, showered down upon you by Providence, draw you not to His throne—if your hearts leap not with ecstacy at the manifold blessings which He heaps upon you, and through which He invites you to pour forth the anthem of gratitude to His hallowed name, neither would they mourn before the Almighty with the mourning that He has chosen, albeit that He spoiled your goods, created wings for your riches, and straitened you in your means. You would still continue stiffnecked and rebellious, no less whether you were required to respond to the melodious chimes of the highest earthly felicity, or to utter your complaints in unison with the dirge of misery and want.

We proceed to comment upon the utter inefficacy of health or sickness to change the heart. What numberless motives to praise his Maker and Redeemer does that man possess, whose body is preserved from disease, and on whose robust and vigorous frame advancing time lays but his gentlest hand!

He sees acquaintances dropping suddenly into the tomb, or waxing weak and feeble in the prime and flower of their age, while he himself is spared to see many days in the land of the living, and to enjoy for a larger number of years the inestimable benefit of a sound mind in a sound body. Well, while "the evil days" are yet absent—while his sleep is deep and undisturbed—while he can work with his hands, or exert the faculties of his mind—while his step is firm, his stature erect, and the grey hairs of care and sorrow have not yet appeared upon him, is he remembering the more gratefully his great and good Creator? Hung round as he is with memorials of His lovingkindness and tender mercy, has he summoned his affections to awake up as a lute and harp? Has he learnt the fitting song? Has he in gladness of heart gone "with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel?" We fear that he has not. In vain has a gracious Lord approached him, so to speak, with all these kinds of music; his harp is still unstrung, his inward parts and affections have not yet sounded to the winning appeal, nor has he, in "a time to dance," danced, as David did, before the Lord. For, unlike that fabled statue, which, when the morning sun shone upon it, hymned the praises of the glorious bridegroom coming forth from his chamber in the east, the stony heart of man, until "new flesh regenerate grows instead," salutes not the rising of "the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings." But, perhaps, God will turn his dancing into mourning; perhaps, as a lion, He will "break all his bones," causing him to "chatter like a crane or a swallow," to "mourn as a dove," and permitting his "eyes to fail with looking upward." Perhaps his days are being "cut off," and "the gates of the grave" at hand, and he is about to be "deprived of the residue of his years;" to "behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world," inasmuch as "his age is departing, and being removed from him as a shepherd's tent." Surely, now that the Lord thus eloquently mourns to him, he will lament as in the words of Hezekiah, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it." Surely, if after "the sorrows of death have compassed him about, and the pains of hell gat hold on him," he recover of his sickness, he will commit to his memory the wailing of the king of Judah—"I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back. For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." Surely, we repeat, he will dance, if the Lord thus pipe to him—or lament, if He thus mourn to him? He will no longer act as a child or speak as a child, but will "put away childish things," and become a man in Christ and in understanding—weeping when his Saviour bids him weep, and making melody in his heart to Him when He bids him be merry and joyful, now that the Lord has led him from the house of feasting to the house of mourning, or from the house of the mourning to the house of feasting. Oh! would that we could say so! Would that we could believe that there is not, even now, not a few, but a generation, who equally, whether their days are good or evil, stop, like the deaf adder, their ears to the voice of the Almighty!

Once more, before passing on to the other subjects of my discourse. I would

show you a fresh illustration of the marvellous obstinacy of the children of this world. There are ministers whose sermons are replete with arguments and evidences of the justice of God. They bring us to Mount Sinai, teach us how the law was given from thence amid thunderings and lightnings, and paint to us the fear of even Moses, "the man of God," at the sight. They, moreover, assure us of the reality and eternity of torment—of "the worm that never dieth," of "the flame that is never quenched." Do the unbelieving tremble before these terrible and alarming certainties? Rather, do they not virtually take up the language of the children in the parable of Jesus, and say, 'We will not lament to these men who mourn unto us—to these men, who tell us that God is in the earthquake, and in the whirlwind and the fire; but we would dance to their piping unto us, to their revelation of God to us in "the still small voice" of peace.' Ah! but would they? We trow not; for often have we known individuals who spake thus—nay, who went so far as to cease to frequent the church where judgment was more reasoned upon than mercy—whom the cords of love drew not the nearer to the throne of grace. Here they heard the ambassador for Christ say, that "God willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," whereas elsewhere they heard him say, that many are "appointed unto wrath;" but they danced not the more to the text of exultation, than they lamented to the text which referred to the decree of condemnation. Here they heard the "faithful steward of the mysteries of God" publishing aloud, and as with the voice of a trumpet, the end and the fruits of sin, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;" whereas, elsewhere, they heard him expatiating in preference upon the theme, that "him that cometh unto Christ He will in no wise cast out;" but neither then did they dance unto the dulcet tones of assurance, more than they lamented unto the harsh and withering denunciations of everlasting vengeance. No state or condition, therefore, will necessarily compel men to come into the terms of the Gospel, and to be reconciled to God through the Saviour. Still will they who "walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," until they have been quickened from a death in trespasses and sins—still, I say, will they justify the remark of our Lord, "that they are like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented."

II. Resulting from this temper of heart and mind by which they injure themselves, is that uncharitable spirit of the ungodly by which they seek to harm religion and its followers. For example, let a convert to the doctrine of the cross begin to deny himself, and with rivers of water running down his eyes to deplore the multitude of his past transgressions, let him keep the Lenten fast, let him surrender up some pleasure to which he was formerly addicted, or withdraw from some companions whose "evil communications" he rightly and Scripturally concludes will corrupt his own manners, and what will the world say of him but what it said of John the Baptist before him: "He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye him?" He gives religion a sad and dark aspect, and not a blithe and lightsome countenance; he alters ways of pleasantness and paths of peace, into ways of anguish and paths of pain; he is too strict, too severe, too rigid in his opinions and actions. Be it so. Is not his sincere conviction and conduct notwithstanding to be respected and esteemed? But in truth he may not be so, but only in our own false and uninstructed judgment; he may

be right in God's estimation, although deemed wrong in ours. And then, instead of being infatuated and beside himself, as his thoughtless relatives and companions suppose him to be, he is full of understanding and knowledge; instead of being a fool and his life a proverb of reproach, as they account him and it to be, he is most wise, and the end of his earthly existence shall be found to be honour and glory; in a word, instead of being "possessed of a devil," he is possessed of the spirit of God.

Turn now to the case of a believer, one who, to use the phrase of our Lord "eats and drinks." How does the world interpret his conduct and opinions? We have the reply in the text: "Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." 'Behold how he partakes of meats and drinks, as we do. See, he refuses not to taste of the fruit of the vine, nor to sit down at the board of hospitable entertainment. We have seen him here, or we have heard of his being there; he speaks to this or that irreligious person, and he is not intimate with this or that devout individual. He is no better than one of ourselves. Nay, he is worse, he is a hypocrite, while we make no pretensions to superior piety and goodness.' This, my brethren, is the language of the worldling respecting the man whose Christianity is either of an ascetic cast or of a less restrained and more easy character. It is ever the language of prejudice, presumption, and error. Let no disciple of Christ, therefore, be so foolish as to imagine that his religion, however forcibly or amiably displayed, can escape obloquy and censure. Let him not think that he will please men whether he feasts or fasts, whether he lives in or retires from the world, whether he puts on sackcloth or arrays his limbs in goodly apparel. For as certainly as, on the one hand, if he fasts and gets him to his Lord right humbly, he will have it turned to his reproach, and hear impious songs and jests framed and passed upon him, so on the other hand, if he looks cheerful at a banquet, touches of its dainties, or puts its beverages to his lips, will men say of him—'He loves this world, despite that he has affirmed his renunciation of it; he loves the food "which perisheth," although he professes to be labouring for that "meat which endureth unto everlasting life;" he loves Christmas because it is an occasion upon which he may "nourish his heart and be wanton, as in a day of slaughter," but he dislikes Lent, because his "god is his belly," and his conversation, I ween, is not, as he says, in heaven.'

III. But "wisdom is justified of her children." The wisdom of God in sending John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah was appreciated by those who were "the sons of God" at the first advent of Christ. They could understand how the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth was a fitting precursor to the reputed son of Joseph and Mary, and how the ministry of comparative terror committed to the former, was rightly adapted to usher in the ministry of peace and consolation committed to the latter. They could therefore be baptised with the baptism of John, admire his preaching, revere his precepts, and not the less therefore on that account receive the baptism of Jesus, be influenced by His sermons, be swayed by His commandments. They neither saw in the forerunner a demoniac, nor in Jesus to whom he pointed and gave his testimony, a "gluttonous man and a wine-bibber."

And so too, now, in the case of all the children of God is wisdom justified. Is it a fast of the church, that they are required to observe, as in Lent? They will not overlook the duties of humiliation and mortification of the flesh. Is it a feast that they are directed to celebrate? Eucharistic vows and offerings will be as readily paid by them in the courts and at the table of the Lord. They feel that there is a season for every thing, "a time to weep and a time to

laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance ;" and therefore, whether they are "allured and brought into the wilderness," they can sing there the song of mourning and lamentation, or whether they are introduced into the pleasant places of the Gospel, they can sing there the song of thanksgiving unto their God. Be the tide of the church sad or merry, they can keep it. If she places them in imagination at the foot of the Saviour's cross, they have the "spirit of grace and supplication," whereby to "look upon Him whom they have pierced, and to mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and to be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." If she places them, in holy idea and fancy, on the spot of the Saviour's birth, and tells them "good tidings of great joy," they will there, praise and bless God who hath "shown a great light to the people that walked in darkness, and a shining light to them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death." They will rehearse with thrilling transport those noble words of the prophet Isaiah, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulders ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever." Moreover, with regard to their Christian brethren individually, they will justify them in their practices and habits, so far, at least, as they are reconcilable with the general principles of the Gospel. They will not despise this man because he eateth not, nor judge this other because he eateth, as knowing that God, having received them both, to their own Master, and not to him, should he presume to judge another man's master, do they stand or fall. They will not prefer one man who esteems one day above another, to another who esteems every day alike, seeing that both may be "fully persuaded in their own mind," and that as "he that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord, so he that regardeth not the day to the Lord he doth not regard it." In a word, they will neither set at nought, nor judge, nor grieve any of their brethren ; remembering that "they shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and that they shall every one of them give account of *himself* to God." But they will cultivate the charity that "suffereth long and is kind," that "is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil," that "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," that "believeth all things, and hopeth all things ;" and thus endued with that lovely and winning grace which is "the very bond of peace and of all virtues," they will, by walking charitably towards their brethren, for whom, equally with themselves, Christ was born and died, "devise liberal things" towards their fellows while they live, and stand and be judged of God by liberal things when they die.

THE WATCHMAN'S REPORT AND ADVICE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

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PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,
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"The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Scir, Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come."—Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

WHEN the word "burden" is attached to a prophecy, it does not necessarily imply that the prediction relates to calamitous events. There are some burdens which refer to glad tidings of joy. The one in my text, although obscure, yet contains important lessons, and is of a mixed nature. It foretells a morning of brightness and sunshine to the inquiring and obedient amongst the people, whilst it speaks of a night of disaster and misery to the careless and sinful.

It is not quite certain who the people of Dumah were; it is, however, generally thought to refer to the Edomites, or Idumeans, a people well known in sacred history.

The prophecy itself, although, as we have said, somewhat obscure, yet contains important lessons, and of easy application. It supposes some one, in reference to events which were coming upon the land, inquiring of the prophet, or "watchman," how the time passed; what indications there were of the coming period—what aspect it was likely to bear. The prophet is represented as reporting that the event was near at hand—that it was of a mixed nature—that it would be attended with light and comfort to the people of God, but with darkness and misery to the wicked and careless inhabitants of the land; and, in order to avert the doom, he exhorts them to inquiry, to return to God, and to come without delay.

You will easily perceive how instructive and interesting the subject is to ourselves. As watchmen in Zion, we must put our people in mind of the events that transpire—of the rapid flight of time—of the awful realities of the eternal world. Just at the conclusion of one of those brief periods of time into which human life is divided, we would remind you, with all affection and anxiety, of the importance of watchfulness, and sobriety, and diligence, in your spiritual calling. If the question is put to us, "Watchman, what of the night?" we would reply, It is fast hastening away; the day of eternity is at hand. "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

May God give us grace to give the warning with all affection and fidelity! and may He give you grace to receive it with attention and loving obedience!

Let us notice, first, who is the "watchman" referred to? secondly, the inquiry made of him; thirdly, the report he makes upon it; and, fourthly, the advice he gives.

I. Who is the "Watchman" referred to?

There are those who think it refers to the Almighty; and it is certain that the Persons in the Godhead are termed "watchers" by the prophet Daniel. He is also said to "watch over man" both for evil and for good. His "eyes are over the children of men, and He orders all their goings." The times and the seasons are in His own power. So that if we were to adopt this view, it would be no improper question to ask Him in humble prayer, 'Oh! Thou Keeper of Israel, who never slumberest nor sleepest, give me an abiding impression of the times and seasons. "Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am." "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."'

But there are others who refer the expression to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He, it is true, is the Shepherd of the flock, and the Watchman of His people; He is the true Prophet of the church, the expositor of truth to the people; and to no one could the question be more properly put as to the times and the seasons. He is the "faithful and true witness," "full of grace and truth."

But although neither of these interpretations gives a harsh or unnatural application, yet it appears to me that the prophet himself, as God's minister, is intended. And this appellation is constantly given to God's ministers. Thus the Almighty speaks to Ezekiel: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel." So in the prophet Isaiah: "The watchmen shall lift up their voice, together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." And again: "Behold, I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem."

The qualifications needful for the exercise of the sacred office, are watchfulness and fidelity. They are men who ought to have knowledge of the times and seasons, and be ready to warn, reprove, and correct. They are to "watch for souls as they who are to give an account." They are, therefore, to stand upon their watchtower—to observe the least signal of hostile approach—and to give the warning; to be the heralds of Christ to prepare His way; to turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that when He comes He may find a people prepared for Him. In a word, that when the question is put to him, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" he may at once be able to announce the lapse of time—the coming of the day—the state of preparation needful—and the consequences of the conduct men are pursuing.

II. But we anticipate. We proceed, therefore, to our second point, namely, the inquiry instituted: "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"

It supposes some one, from a general knowledge of the predictions regarding the people and nation, and from some present alarming appearances, anxiously inquiring how far the time had advanced in reference to the coming period—how soon the decree threatened might be executed. As if he had said, 'Watchman, I know that a day of doom and of retribution for our offences is to come upon us—a day of calamity for our sins. I cannot rest as I look forward to it; tell us, I beseech you, how the night passes. Is the day predicted at hand?'

You at once perceive how important this question; and you are not surprised at the anxiety of the inquirer, nor that he should repeat the question again and again.

But does it not suggest inquiries to us even far more important than the one before us? Have not the most alarming denunciations been uttered by

the Almighty against the transgressions of men? Has He not declared that He will "visit their iniquities with the rod, and their sins with scourges?" Has He not informed us that He has appointed a day in which he will "judge the world in righteousness?" Has He not said, that "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and that all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him?" Is not the time of His coming declared to be sudden and unexpected, and the decisions that will attend it the most important and decisive that can be imagined? So much so, that it will fix and determine unalterably the states and conditions of all mankind.

And have we not had fearful indications of the uncertainty of all earthly things of late? What mean those mighty convulsions, which have shaken and thrown down kingdoms, and thrones, and empires? Is there no voice in all this to the sons of men? "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

My brethren, the whole state of the world demands of the servants of God that they should prayerfully and diligently regard the signs and movements of the times. And so far as regards that which is important for His people to know, "surely the Lord will do nothing, but He will make known His will unto His servants."

But there are personal enquiries which ought to press upon all who are rightly impressed with a sense of their responsibility to God. When we reflect that we have passed another of the brief periods into which the seventy years of human life are divided, and on which the momentous interests of eternity depend; that we are a year nearer that event which is to determine our happiness or misery forever—who does not at once feel that inquiries are suggested by the very circumstances in which we are placed, of the most serious and awful nature? "How is the period of my probation passing? What is the progress of the night, which is to be succeeded by a morrow which knows no change or ending? How speeds the night in which my soul's salvation is to be determined? the night which precedes my salvation or ruin—my happiness or misery—my heaven or hell? "Watchman, what of the night?" Is it fast passing away? Is the Judge at the door? Is eternity at hand? Am I prepared? Am I preparing? Am I ripening for heaven, or am I fitting for destruction? Will the dawning day bring me joy or sorrow, weal or woe? Will it be ushered in with darkness, and storms, and tempests—or with light, and sunshine, and calmness?"

My brethren, to many here present, we believe, whilst the question suggests matter enough for humiliation and self-abasement on account of many shortcomings and much imperfection, yet it could be met and answered, as we shall see, in a satisfactory manner. They have found peace with God through Jesus Christ, and are waiting as His children. We would only say, therefore, to you, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

But to how many does the inquiry call forth subjects for the most bitter and heartfelt regret! "What of the night" to many, who are living without any reference to their Maker, and their Saviour, and their obligations? My brethren, to you the question is one of fearful consideration. You have the accumulated sins of another year to repent of! You are another year nearer

eternity, and still unprepared for your departure ! To you all the woes pronounced against ungodly men are impending ! "What of the night ?" It is fast passing away ; and it is, in your case, if you go on in your impenitence, to be succeeded by "the blackness of darkness for ever." Oh ! brethren, our message to you is one of awful import : "Say ye to the wicked, it shall be ill with him."

But we are, in some measure, entrenching upon our next head. We beg you, therefore, to pause, and consider how much is implied in the question before us : what thoughts it suggests, both as it regards the eventful times in which we live, and also in reference to the last day and the last hours of another year of our probation ! Oh ! that we may faithfully and wisely pursue such enquiry until we can answer it satisfactorily to our consciences and to our God !

III. We pass on to observe, the watchman's report in answer to the question—"The watchman said, The morning cometh and also the night."

This report is most comprehensive, and may convey the following ideas :—

1. That *there will be nothing settled or permanent : changes may be expected.*

The same idea is expressed in other terms in Zechariah. "It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark ; but it shall be one day, that shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night." It intimates that there should be neither constant sunshine, nor constant shower.

There has always been a mixture of light and darkness in the church—in its perceptions of truth, and in the events connected with it. How soon, in the first ages, was the light of the glory of Christ dimmed ! It sometimes seemed as if there was nothing but night ; the day was scarcely visible—all darkness and no light. It is at present so in our beloved country ; there is some light here and there ; but how very much darkness at the same time ! So in the agitations through which we have passed this year, wherein men's hearts have failed them for fear !—what darkness and misery have been manifest,—yet we have not been without tokens of light and joy !

So in the case of individual Christians, in times of sorrow and distress : how often have the heavens over seemed as brass—darkness has appeared to compass his path ; yet he has not been without gleams of comfort and light. He has felt in his soul alternations of joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, light and darkness. And so, my brethren, it will continue to be to the end of time ! So that if the question be put either in reference to the church, or to individual experience, as regards what is before us—"Watchman, what of the night ?" we at once say, everything is uncertain ; nothing in this life can possibly be depended upon—so uncertain, "that the race cannot be promised to the swift, nor the battle to the strong : " neither yet provision to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill ; " but time and chance happeneth to all."

There has been at all times a constant succession of light and cloud—of day and night : consult the history of all past time : if there has been prosperity at one time, it has been succeeded by adversity : if there have been periods of joy and gladness, there have also been seasons of sorrow and distress. It has ever been so, and ever will be so. So that we can say with confidence as to what may be expected in the coming year, You may calculate upon a succession of changes. You have nothing on earth that can be depended upon with confidence—you may be in prosperity at present, your mountain may seem to stand strong, and all to go well with you ; but do not depend upon this : do not be surprised if it should be followed by adversity : set not your heart upon anything on earth. Some of you may be in heaviness through temptation, in trials severe and complicated, in sorrow from disappointments

and bereavements. Look up ; your sorrow, in an unexpected manner, may be turned into joy : your mourning into praise. But do not calculate with confidence as to anything in this world. The morning cometh and also the night. We cannot tell you what may happen through the coming year ; but do not be surprised at unexpected changes : do not wonder if your earthly hopes should be disappointed ; or, if your lot should be better than your forebodings may intimate.

But one thing we can say to you with the utmost confidence—' Give yourselves to God ; live near to Him ; cast your care upon Him ; obey His voice—and then, come sunshine or cloud ; come joy or sorrow ; come prosperity or adversity ; come pleasure or pain ; come day or night, " all things shall work together for good to them that love God ; to them who are the called according to His purpose."

And therefore, my brethren, although there is uncertainty with regard to the events of the coming year, yet we can say to you with confidence, " Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

2. But the report without all doubt is designed to indicate *a period of coming joy to believers, of misery and woe to the wicked—to the one the morning cometh ; to the other night.*

" Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them." Our report to those who are united to Christ and living to His glory in all loving obedience, is one of unmingled good. They may be sorely tried ; they may be passing through deep waters of tribulation ; they may be going on their way weeping, oppressed, cast down through manifold temptations ; the night of trouble may be, as it were, dark with storms—but there is a morning of joy behind ; a morning near at hand. " Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Oh, yes, he who now may be permitted to " go on his way weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him."

Ye servants of the Lord, " lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The night to you is already far spent, and the day is at hand—the day of comfort and joy ; the day of light and glory ; the day of emancipation from trial and fear ; from sin and suffering. It is but a little while and your sorrow shall be ended, and your night turned into day. Then it shall be said to you—" Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee : " *then* " thy sun shall no more go down, neither for brightness shall thy moon withdraw itself ; but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended : " *then* your light shall be more effulgent as reflected from the night of your adversity : *then* your joy shall be heightened from the remembrance and the contrast with your past sorrow—" Your light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Oh, then, look up ; the night wears away ; the dawn is breaking ; it will soon be light—perpetual light ; glorious and eternal day.

But whilst the watchman's report indicates future joy to the believer—it as *surely is prophetic of misery to the wicked.* " The morning cometh, and also the night."

Our report to those who enter upon a new year in a state of impenitence and neglect of Gospel mercies, is as clear as words can make it. If they go on in their present indifference and folly, we are commanded to say, " the night cometh : " if they die as they are now living, there is then a night of desolation and ruin to succeed their present night of ignorance and sin—a night gloomy

and terrible, worse than that which once brooded over Egypt—a night to be followed by no more day—a night of sorrow, of despair, of “the blackness of darkness for ever.” Oh, as time passes onwards, this night approaches—stretching forth its dark and disastrous shadows—perhaps this year it may set in upon some one here present: his sun of hope may be about to set for ever. O ye worldly, ye sinful, ye negligent hearers of God’s Word, do you ask us, “What of the night?” We answer, It hasteneth on—it is at hand; it is before you. Oh! for your souls’ sake, pause. Do not go on in your sinful neglect of salvation, lest it should be said of you that this night should come upon you in 1849, and find you in an unprepared state—a vessel of wrath fitted by his own wilful obstinacy and rebellion for destruction. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.”

3. There is one other observation in the watchman’s report worthy of attention, namely, that the morning and the night are said to *come together*; “the morning cometh and also the night.”

It may seem strange to many that these periods should be said to come *simultaneously*. But if you look at the characters to whom they thus come, the difficulty is removed. That which will be a time of light and comfort to the righteous, will be one of darkness and dismay to the ungodly. Indeed, it is partly so in the present imperfect state of things. The very blessings of the impenitent are turned into curses; their day of mercy and grace becomes a night of darkness and calamity; whilst, on the other hand, all that appear night and trouble and distress to the people of God, are means of increased light and joy to them. Their sorrow is turned into joy; their tribulation worketh patience and experience and hope.

But at the grand and decisive day, when the night of probation is past,—then the morning of light and joy cometh to the upright—the morning of darkness and despair to the ungodly. That which will be everlasting light and felicity to the one, will be eternal darkness and woe to the other. The one will go away into everlasting life; the other into everlasting punishment.

And now, brethren, mark the report which the watchman has to deliver in answer to the inquiry, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? All in reference to this world is uncertain, changing, not to be depended upon; therefore do not depend upon it, turn your eyes from beholding vanity. To the righteous we have to proclaim a period of coming joy—“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” To the wicked, there is nothing but misery in your path, and the end thereof is darkness and death: and the day of death and judgment, which bringeth the day of light and gladness to the people of God, will bring with it eternal night to the impenitent.

My brethren, is this report true? Can any man here seriously doubt its truth? Then, I say, go, and as rational men act consistent with the dictates of an enlightened conscience. “Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace.”

IV. But we must briefly refer to the advice which the watchman gives in consequence of his report. “If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come!”

It is supposed that the inquirer is deeply impressed with the import of the message, and under such conviction the watchman advises him how to act.

And no advice could be more appropriate. It embraces every thing. If it were followed out by us all, it would be the means of securing for us our present and everlasting welfare.

1. *Inquiry* is the first duty recommended.

“If ye will inquire,—inquire ye!” We look for nothing, and expect nothing

so long as there is indifference. It was the great sin of God's professing people of old, that "they would not consider." It is only when we can excite a spirit of anxious and serious inquiry that we can hope for lasting good from our efforts. And what subjects, my brethren, press upon us for consideration and inquiry! What am I? Whither am I travelling? What will be the end of my pilgrimage? How does my account stand with my Maker? Am I reconciled to Him? Am I prepared to stand before Him with acceptance? Have I as a sinner fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before me in the Gospel? As I look round upon the world and see the agitations and troubles which are coming upon the nations, am I reposing upon that arm which has the destinies of all worlds at its disposal? As I enter upon another year of uncertainty and change, can I look forwards with composure? Can I say—

"My soul through my Redeemer's care
Safe from the second death I feel?"

and that whatever may be the scenes through which I may be called to pass, I know that all shall be for my good? "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

Or if, unhappily, there are any still in darkness, still cleaving to the world and its perishing vanities, let me implore you to pause and ask what these things can do for you, and what must be the end of your present course?

Oh! we beseech you all to be diligent in your inquiries as to your state before God. If we can only induce you to ponder your path, to consider the important things which belong to your peace, our object will be attained and all will be for good. "Oh! that they were wise, and would ponder their ways and think upon their latter end!"

2. But to diligent inquiry, *return to God* is recommended.

All inquiry in fact is for this purpose, and it would be useless if it did not issue in an actual return to your Father. Let it not be said of any here as it was said of Ephraim, "They will not frame their doings to return to God." On the contrary, let all you do be to that end. As long as you are separated from God and wander from Him, there is nothing to look forwards to but misery and shame. Return, therefore, to Him by humble confession of your sins—by supplicating His mercy,—by believing on His Son—by giving up yourselves to His service. If ye do these things ye shall never fail. "O Israel, return unto the Lord God thy God; take with you words and say unto Him, 'Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render unto Thee the calves of our lips.'" "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

3. The prophet closes with one more observation, and it is used by way of encouragement—"Come."

It is evidently designed to secure their confidence and to induce them to go to God in earnest prayer. The Scriptures are full of such precious invitations. "Come," saith the Saviour, "for all things are ready." "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Everything conspires to invite men to be reconciled to God. "The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely." Thus, dear brethren, let the year close by your attending to these heaven-inspired directions. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up the fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord; till He come and rain righteousness upon you."

Thus, my brethren, you have seen the watchman's report and advice to the most anxious inquiries that can possibly be proposed. Will you not receive it, and thus prepare for what is before you?

(1.) As *ministers* we should learn from it our duty.

We are watchmen in Israel, and we ought ever to be at our post of duty. Like the children of Issachar we should be men "who have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." We are to "exhort, reprove, rebuke, with all tenderness." We are to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

(2.) What lessons are suggested to the *hearers* of God's Word!

To the neglecters of salvation: oh! how fearful the prospect to you! Night to be succeeded by night. No light, no day, no brightness for you. All beyond the present brief period, the "blackness of darkness for ever!" Oh! my fellow-sinners, why will you die? Now, to-night, I beseech you to put off with the old year your sins. Awake to righteousness! "Turn ye to the stronghold as prisoners of hope." There is forgiveness—there is mercy—there is salvation. Oh! may you have grace to return with all your hearts.

But it is especially to the members of this congregation that I would address myself to-night. There is much I would press upon your attention. There are some things of a general nature, and there are others of a particular character.

Those of a general nature: to all the Lord's people let me say, omit no opportunity of getting good and of doing good.

To *get good*, be more earnest in *private prayer*. All things are possible to him that seeks and asks in faith. The agony of believing prayer will obtain all that has been procured for you by the sufferings of your Saviour. Be more regular in *attendance upon the ordinances* of religion. They are the channels of blessing. "Where two or three are met together in My name I will be with them." Be more *concerned to hallow the Sabbath* and to devote it to the purposes for which it was instituted—to be regular in your *attendance on the week-day service*. As far as I have heard and seen, all good men have been united in the view, that this was one of the chief means of keeping them above the chilling influence of worldly pursuits. To be more *circumspect* in your walk and conduct, watching over your tempers—your spirit—your lives; and to do all, not in a legal spirit, but depending simply upon the grace of Jesus Christ.

To *do good*, strive to be *more bountiful* in the distribution of the goods God has committed to you as *stewards* of His bounty; to be more desirous of seeing the kingdom of Christ *extended*. For this end do not let any of the benevolent plans fall to the ground which have been established in connection with this church; take the most lively interest in all missionary operations; strengthen the hands of all engaged in doing good. In a word, endeavour to "glorify God in your bodies and souls which are His."

As to those *particular* duties which press upon us, let us each of us in the several spheres we are called to occupy endeavour to fill up its appropriate obligations to the honour of God and to the good of those around us. As *heads of families*, to be examples of the benevolent spirit of Christianity, and whilst God is honoured in our households, to let the spirit of love be seen in our conduct abroad. As *parents*, training our children for eternity; as *children*, obedient—loving—devoted; as *masters*, giving to our "servants that which is just and equal;" as "*servants*, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not unto men." In a word, in every situation in which we are placed remembering that we are not our own, but Jesus Christ's, and giving up ourselves to His service. It is thus, my brethren, we shall fulfil our obligations to God and man and "finish our course with joy." It is thus we shall glorify God and finally be received "into everlasting habitations."

THE DAY APPROACHING.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 7, 1849.

"And so much the more as ye see the day approaching."—Hebrews x. 25.

A NOTE of time is struck here, and the context shows that the apostle makes use of this note as a stimulus to Christian earnestness in every department of the Christian life. He had already largely discoursed in this epistle on the great subject of Christian privilege; showing the true atonement as the antitype of the bleeding sacrifices of the Jewish altar, the true Intercessor at the right hand of God as the antitype of the Jewish high priest in the most holy place of the tabernacle. Having enlarged on these and their kindred topics with a copiousness of detail most refreshing to the Christian heart, we find him in this chapter, at the nineteenth verse, summing up, and proceeding practically to apply, all that he had already opened and described. "Having, therefore, brethren," he says, "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God." These are the capital blessings of Christianity—an open door of access to God, and a Friend at His right hand when we go in. In these he comprises all that he had been writing about; and he speaks of these as blessings already proved to be in possession. These being possessed, he proceeds to show the use that may be made of them. These are, indeed, the capital blessings, and these we have in Jesus Christ; by His death and resurrection He has opened the door, and by His ascension He has gone in before us "now to appear in the presence of God for us;" so, then, we have access by that new way, and we "have an High Priest over the house of God." This being so, what then? Why, then, let us make use of these things if we have them. And he proceeds practically to apply them in exhortations concerning every department in the Christian life—in the heart, in the profession, in the relative usefulness of the child of God amongst his brethren here on earth. First, he applies them to the state of mind and heart and feeling of the Christian having these things: "let us draw near with a true heart"—a heart true to its point and purpose, not falsely wandering after various objects, but true to one. "In full assurance of faith;" that is, "holding the beginning of our confidence stedfast"—that beginning of confidence which is lively and exclusive. This is precisely what is here called the "full assurance of faith." But what if, in so striving to "draw near," our hearts should condemn us for some transgression? What is to be done with that? Is that to keep us away? No, we must get rid of it. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." When transgression lies upon the conscience, here is the Christian's mode of dealing with it. He is not to raise it into a barrier between himself and God, for he has access by a way in which it is provided that sin may be removed; but he is to have

recourse to "the blood of sprinkling." The allusion is to the practice, under the law of Moses, of sprinkling the book, and all the people, and the vessels of the ministry, with the blood of the sacrifice mingled in a basin of water, making it thin enough to be sprinkled, and then a hyssop rod, with some scarlet wool tied at the top of it, dipped into the basin, and the blood therewith sprinkled abroad. It was the application of the sacrifice; and allusion is here made to its continual application—the "heart" being, "sprinkled from an evil conscience," and the sinner still having access by that "new and living way" which Christ "hath consecrated for us by His blood." "And our bodies washed with pure water:" another allusion to the practice under the law of constantly washing with water. Water is an emblem of the Spirit. Christ came not by water only, nor by blood only, but by water and blood—conveying the atonement by the blood, and the cleansing and sanctifying power by the Spirit. As the "heart," then, represents all the inner man, which is to be kept clean by "the blood of sprinkling," the "body" represents the outward man, the life and conduct, which is to be cleansed by the Holy Spirit, the body being "washed with pure water." Then the apostle says, further, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised." There was a difficulty in the way of the Hebrews holding fast their profession of the Christian faith. Those among them who were converted to Christianity, were plagued by their fellow-countrymen telling them that they had forsaken the old religion. Judaism was the old religion revealed from Heaven, it could not be doubted; why should that religion be forsaken? Those of the Hebrews who had embraced the Christian religion were sorely tried by this; and the only argument by which they could reasonably and properly be prevailed upon to take the Christian religion and reject the old Jewish, was the argument used in this epistle, which showed that the Christian religion did no despite to the Jewish, but honoured it, acknowledging its Divine origin, while it professed to find its true meaning. St. Paul does not treat Judaism as a false thing, but as a temporary thing. He could not ask men to leave Judaism as a thing that was wrong—it was right, and had been revealed from heaven; but he asked them to leave it as a thing that was done with, having answered its purpose. Now, not seeing this, they were sorely tried in "holding fast their profession;" and he urges them to hold it fast on this ground, that "He is faithful that promised." Then, advancing into the further department of relative usefulness, he adds, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." We need stirring up by one another. "As iron sharpens iron, so does the heart of a man stir up his friend." We are disposed to be sluggish, particularly in religion; and "a word spoken in season, how good is it!"—a ready, kind, affectionate, encouraging, stimulating word. "Let us consider one another" for this purpose. Let us mutually consider what we are doing, what we are about; not for the purpose of slander to a third person, but for the purpose of Christian encouragement to one another, "to provoke unto love and good works." "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another;" meeting together and considering our mutual infirmities—confessing our faults one to another, that we may be able to pray one for another. There ought to be more of this among Christians. You ought not to be so reserved. You have a great deal to overcome in the constitutional reserve that belongs to the national character. It is the universal observation all over the world, that the English character is reserved; and that is one reason why this department of Christianity has little or no use among you. You are afraid to open your minds to one another; you can talk on any subject except that of your own feelings, your own experience, and

your own heart. There is an apprehension of exaggeration or of hypocrisy which deters you; and so this branch of Christian exhortation is very little attended to practically. Try it, my brethren. Have you any whom you can call friends, Christian friends? What more suitable occupation than to take one another to task a little as to how your hearts are going on with God—to “provoke unto love?” “Consider one another;” “exhort one another.” And then the apostle urges all these things by a “so much the more”—the note of time in the text—“so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” There is an urgency about all this, because the opportunities may not last long.

The expression “day” is a very common one in the Bible. It is used, as other words are, in various senses. It is used to signify the natural day of four-and-twenty hours; it is used to signify the artificial day, the rising and the setting of the sun, which varies at different times and seasons, because of the obliquity of the sphere; it is used to signify the civil day, which varies in the manner of counting according to the habits of the various nations of the world. The Babylonians reckoned their day from sunrise to sunrise; our habit is to reckon from midnight until midnight; the Jews reckoned from evening until evening; the Romans reckoned from six o’clock in the morning till six the next morning. These have been the civil days. But the expression “day” is used in Scripture, in a less direct manner than this, to signify an indefinite period of time. It is used to express the forty years during which the Jews were in the wilderness, called “the day of temptation,” that is, the period of temptation. And in this larger sense we read in Scripture of a “day” of grace, a “day of vengeance,” a “day of death,” a “day of judgment.”

Let us consider these.

I. The apostle did not say to the Hebrews that their “day” of grace was “approaching,” nor can I say so to you. Their day of grace had come, and so has yours. Your day of grace did not approach with this new year; you had it last year, you have had it all your years, you have it still—it has followed you into this new year. “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Now is your day of opportunities, of means of grace, of ordinances, of sacraments, of sermons, of books, of Christian conversation. This is your day of grace. It should be remembered, however, that, as there is an opening, so there is a close to the day of grace. The Gospel sun has risen upon you in all its light, in all its warmth, in all its privileges, in all its responsibilities. I do not know of anything more that could be done for you; I know no better opportunities that you could have. No people on the face of the earth since the world was made, ever had more favourable opportunities than you have had. God has never done more, in the way of providing opportunities, for any people in the world than He has done for you. What could you wish to have added? Nothing: not a wish ungratified as far as means go. But there is a setting of the Gospel sun as well as a rising. Of this the Hebrews are warned. Their nation as a nation had been warned of this by our Lord himself. When “He came near the city and beheld it, He wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day,”—it was her day of grace still—“if thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Her day of grace was just expiring. “For the days shall come upon thee,” He adds, “that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Of this the Hebrews, as individuals, to whom this epistle was addressed, had been warned by the apostle. He

had reminded them of the language of David to their forefathers, saying, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." To-day, if you will hear, harden not your hearts: their day of grace, then, they were warned, might close; and it did close. This was not the only warning of the kind given. To the same purpose was the warning, which the Lord Jesus Christ sent to the church at Ephesus by the message that he gave to St. John in the Isle of Patmos. To the angel of the church at Ephesus he desired him to write and say, that, except they repented, He would remove the candlestick out of its place. The Gospel is not always left in the same country, nor in the same part of the country; not always in the same town, nor in the same congregation in a town. And here I might warn you, and warn myself, that our day of grace, so auspiciously commenced in this house, may not last long. Fair and favourable as its morning seems, it may soon be overcast. It is not in our keeping. Some of those who commenced with us in the last year are already beyond all means of grace. Some who worshipped with us when this church was opened, have since died. Our day of grace, then, my brethren, is now at its full, in its meridian; I dare not guess to what hour we may reach; but you must all know, that every day of time has its appointed limit. This is serious; it calls for urgency. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," because, "the night cometh when no man can work." Now, avail yourselves of these opportunities, while you have them, and tell your neighbours to do the same. You are not all doing this as you ought.

II. But, then, secondly, in many places and in many persons, where a day of grace was long enjoyed, there has succeeded a "day of vengeance." "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and the reaping is often in this world as well as the sowing. The retribution is not always kept for eternity; there is retribution in time. The day of vengeance predicted to come upon the Jews, is probably what the apostle immediately referred to in this epistle. The Lord had plainly told them that all things that were written respecting them, should be fulfilled. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." The days of vengeance! Now some of the things that were written are very instructive to us. It was written concerning the Jews that they disregarded God's words in the mouth of His prophets, and that because they disregarded those words He would make the words fire and the people tow. It was written concerning them that they fancied themselves secure, and had "made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell," that when the overflowing scourge should come it might not fall upon them, and they were told, "Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place; and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." Long after this had been said by Isaiah their day of grace continued. Jesus was among them at its close, when the shades of evening were setting in, and the dreadful morrow of vengeance was ready to follow, and He told them it was coming, "that all things that were written might be fulfilled."

Now there are many things written about the end of this present dispensation of ours, and beyond all question they shall be fulfilled. It is written

concerning Christendom, that men shall fancy themselves secure, that they "shall say, Peace and safety," just when their day of grace is expiring, and that while they are so speaking sudden destruction shall come upon them, like travail upon a woman with child, and that they shall not escape. So that not only by the analogy of the Old Testament, but by the plain language of the New, we are warned that a day of vengeance is to follow this day of grace. But such days of vengeance are brought upon men in various ways ; by providential visitations. It was by a providential visitation that they came upon Jerusalem. It was by a Roman invasion, reducing the people of Judea to the most dreadful straits of want, the people of the country flocking before the Roman army into the city, and then the enlarged population of the city hemmed round by the Roman soldiers and perishing from famine. Here was a day of vengeance from God. And now, in various ways, days of vengeance come, putting an end to days of grace. Opportunities are put an end to ; domestic circumstances occur, withdrawing men from means of grace, from the Gospel ; distances are enlarged, and prosperity is diminished ; expences cannot be incurred, and opportunities cannot be enjoyed, as before. There is a solemn calamity. Domestic judgments fall also upon families, I say not in anger, because of means abused, but as a matter of fact, whatever the motive may be in Him who brings them. Without presuming to scan His reasons, we are commanded to observe His doings ; and these things He does. He brings, in various ways, domestic and relative and personal judgments, which cut short, or greatly diminish, the opportunities of grace. He orders circumstances in families so that its members are sent away into lands of darkness and dreariness, lands of heathenism or barbarism or apostacy, where they are entirely deprived of the means of grace. And this is sometimes voluntarily done, in the way of business. It is not an unfrequent thing, as many of you well know, for members of a Christian family in professional avocations to cut themselves off entirely from the means of grace, to throw themselves amongst heathens or amongst Romanists, where no means of grace can be had. I do not dare to say that such things never should be done, but it is a very serious thing to do wilfully ; for what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and is himself lost ? what would he be profited if he gained the Indies and lost communion with God ?

Now in other ways days of vengeance, putting an end to days of grace, are brought upon men ; as in national calamities ; as in such commotions as they have had in the last year on the Continent. What became of the means of grace in Paris ? What has become now of the means of grace amongst the churches in various towns of Germany ? The people are in uproar, the waves of democracy rising and threatening all the mounds of established order, so that men's minds are terrified ; and though there seems to be a merciful pause, still the world is, as it were, on a volcano ; for the old established rules of authority will not do, men will not obey them, and what they would have the multitude do not know : they want something which they have not, and they know not how to get it ; everything is uncertain, everything unstable. A day is approaching which may shake every throne and every Established church in Christendom. And what then ? What should Christians be prepared for ? For troublous days. We should all be prepared for storms. How do we prepare for natural storms ? Why, we build a strong house and have it fortified against the tempest. We take care that the doors and windows are made capable of resisting the impetuosity of the gale. We seek a hidingplace from the tempest, a covert from the storm ; and in a climate like this we should be considered mad, if with the means of having a house over our heads we were to wait until the storm came to get a house. We prepare the house

for the storm, and we prepare it with the more earnestness because we see the storm approaching. What is to be done here, then, as ye see a day approaching when your means of grace may be removed, a day when even our own favoured country, hitherto comparatively quiet, may be disturbed, when our means of grace may be invaded, our church involved in confusion, and our government unable to act? Where is our security against this? We have no master spirits on whom to rely, and we have been taught to rely upon no man. The heavings of the masses have threatened employers, and as regards those who are yet quiet, it depends much more upon the comparative amount of wages than upon their principles how long they shall remain so. Is there, then, no possibility of a day approaching? And where should Christians be found? We have a new and living way of access to God; we have an High Priest over the house of God. We should be found "drawing near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;" we should be found "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;" we should be found keeping "our bodies washed with pure water;" we should be found "holding fast our profession;" whatever men may think of it, however they may call it bigotry, however they may denounce it as fanaticism, however in the enlightened temperament of their philosophy they may call it the darkness of the middle age, we should "hold fast our profession," for "He is faithful that promised." And we should "consider one another," have a friendly eye to things around, consider where failures are, and gently, kindly, affectionately, but firmly, point them out—not in ill-nature to find fault, with Christian anxiety to do good, to "provoke unto love and to good works," and this "the more as ye see the day approaching."

Let us enter into our blessed house, and close the doors around us, and "hide for a little while till the indignation is overpast." God is our house. "Our life is hid with Christ in God." It is our privilege to enclose ourselves within the perfections of Jehovah. The chambers of our house are the wisdom, the power, the love, the grace, the long-suffering, the gentleness, the goodness of God. We have access to those blessed chambers in Christ Jesus, the open door; and in the presence-chamber we have Himself at the right hand of the Father, ever ready to make us welcome, and to shelter us from the storm. "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people," whether in peace or in war, in tranquillity or in uproar, in commotion or in revolution—blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.

See to it, then, my friends. Look into your Christian feelings and your Christian calling, your Christian enjoyments and your Christian experience. Let all be bright, let all be alive; leave not anything to be done by and bye, as though you would then have more time for it, but be on the alert as soldiers in the field. Your enemies are in the field; be you, then, prepared for the fight; have "your lamps burning and your loins girded," and be yourselves waiting for the battle—"so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

III. Though no such day as I have imagined, should approach our favoured land within our time, yet is there another "day approaching" which calls for preparation—a day which must arrive, a day which no power can ward off, no riches bribe. It may come suddenly to many of us; to all it is approaching with gradual, but determined and decisive step. It is giving notes of warning as it comes in many of us. "We have the sentence of death in ourselves." How many do I speak to, who realize some commencement of infirmity, which, however it may be parried, however it may be mitigated, however, by care and caution, by medical attendance and watchfulness, it may

be warded off for a season, or rather may be prevented from becoming worse, yet is surely there, and in the wear and tear of the ordinary life of man will tell, will make good its lodgment in our frail frames, and will execute its message at the appointed time! The "day of death" is approaching. It is a painful day in many respects. To leave so many things and persons whom we have long loved; to leave the hurry of business to which we have been so long used that it has become a second nature to us; to leave the cheering smiles of kind friends, to whom we have been in the habit of going when our business was over; to leave the delightful countenances, the welcome expression of those whom we so tenderly loved in our domestic circle; to leave our convenient houses where we have made so many things to our wish, and our pleasant fields, and all the comforts and enjoyments of home, all the embellishments which we have heaped around us—matters of ornament, matters of taste—on which so many thoughts have been allowed to rest, and that for so many years; to be taken from all, to part with all, and all the property which we have so toiled to acquire, which we have early risen and late taken rest to heap together—to leave all this is a painful thing. What can overcome this pain but a bright prospect of better things, the prospect of a richer property, kinder friends, more welcome looks, a more convenient house, more delightful fields, and more beautiful objects surrounding us, transcending all the taste and the beauty this world can present? If, indeed, we have a bright and realising view of the glory that shall be, then our regrets at leaving this poor earthly tabernacle may be overcome. For everything is comparative, and there is no more sad and distressing proof how little Christian faith is in exercise, than that we so seldom see triumph in death, triumph over the world we are leaving with all its attractive contents, through the superior attractions of the world to which we are going. Yet this is what ought to be. And if we would be ready for the approach of this day—(and who can tell how soon it may come upon him?)—if we would be ready for the approach of an epidemic disease which is "no respecter of persons" and carries away its hundreds from a neighbourhood; if we see that such a day is, or may be "approaching," and would be fortified and guarded against it at whatever time it may come, what is our proper course? To be "drawing near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." To be realising what we have in Christ. This is our only effectual preparation; nothing else will meet the case. All acquirements of a different kind are vain. Then the time is past for their brilliancy; they were for this life. All scientific acquirements are vain then. Whatever discoveries they may have led to, or whatever commendations they may have obtained during this life, they are vain on the bed of death. All ancient learning, all classical accuracy, all attainments in the arts, all sense of beauty, is vain then. It was Dr. Watts who said to a friend that came to see him on his death-bed, "You come now to see an old friend; we have talked on many subjects of learning, and criticism and controversy; now none of these things suit me, I must now take that view of the Gospel which the poorest Christian in the town can take as well as I;" and so he died, in simple reliance on Jesus. See, then, my brethren, that you realise this reliance, "so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

IV. Once more. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Every one of you "must give account of himself to God," where there will be no possibility of concealment, no doubtful examination of witnesses, no hesitation about facts, no cross-examination to ascertain what the facts were, but where

all will be transparent to the Judge, all that we have done in the flesh, whether it were good, or whether it were bad. It is as true as that you sit there now, that you shall "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that you may receive the things done in the body, according to that you have done, whether it were good or bad." "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left," and He will address them both, one after the other; He will set forth what the one have done, and what the other have done; and these shall go into eternal life, and those shall go into everlasting fire. How shall we be ready for the "day" which is thus "approaching?" The answer is as before; no man shall stand in that judgment, but the man who is in Christ Jesus. No man has done good but the man in whom the Holy Ghost has been. All that the world calls goodness, will not appear good then. The true and faithful saying of the Reformers, will then show itself to be true, that what are called the good works of unconverted men, are beyond doubt sins. "We doubt not," they say, "that they have the nature of sin." So that the only man who will be found then to have done good, is the man who has been made good by the creation in him of a new heart, and grafted into Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. The whole multitude of the "goats" will be found to have invariably done evil. The thoughts of their hearts were worldly and without God continually, and they therefore go to their own place. But you know what religion is. Keep it in exercise—keep it in life. Be drawing near, daily, hourly, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, that ye may keep near;—for the reproaches of conscience, unanswered, would drive you away; you must answer them with "the blood of sprinkling," or you cannot keep close; and "having your bodies washed with pure water;" the outward good springing from a renewed heart, for when the tree is good, the fruit is good. This is the only preparation for the judgment, "the day" of the judgment of God.

Whether, then, you consider the expiring day of grace, or whether you consider the possibly near day of vengeance; whether you consider the certainly approaching day of death, or whether you consider the equally certain day of judgment, this, this is what we have to say to you—"Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end." Be coming to God continually, though you have come; believing, though you have believed; receiving pardon, though you are pardoned; rejoicing in Him who hath done these things;—then will you assuredly be under the shelter of His wings, of His shield and buckler, in that day; and having done all, you will stand. Stand fast now, my brethren. You are in the field, and your Captain is not come, but He has shown you what to do till He comes; and blessed are the soldiers, whom their Captain, when He comes, shall find so doing. Do it, then; and "so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

WORK WITH THY MIGHT.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, D.D., LL.D.

PREACHED IN GREAT GEORGE'S STREET CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1849.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—Eccles. ix. 10.

IN the whole compass of the sacred Volume I could not find a passage more appropriate from which to address you in this, the first discourse on the first Sabbath of a new year. On a review of the past year, how much occurs to your remembrance which you ought to have done, and which perhaps you proposed to do, but which, after all, you have left undone! And the reflection is painful. You feel, with regard to a large portion of it at any rate, that there is no small amount of criminality involved in your neglect; and you are prepared to sympathise with Archbishop Ussher in the prayer which, it is said, he uttered on his dying bed—"O Lord, forgive my sins of omission." But if such a retrospect is painful with regard to the past year, how much more so must it be with regard to one's past life! If on the threshold of the new year, the neglects and failings of the past one come painfully to our remembrance, oh! how bitter, how cutting, must such remembrances be on the confines of the grave, on the border, the brink, of the eternal world! Now, to a large extent, the injury may be repaired, the error may be corrected, the lost ground may be retrieved; but then it will be impossible, then it will be too late, and that which has been neglected all through life, and which stands as a bitter and painful remembrance of duty undischarged in the hour and article of death, must continue for ever. But, my brethren, the text contains an antidote against a misery like this. It urges you to a prompt, an immediate, a diligent, a faithful discharge, of whatever the Bible and conscience tell you that you ought to do; and if such be your determination and purpose by the help of God, at the commencement of every new year, and if every year be occupied in the fulfilment of your object, then in the hour and article of death, instead of vain regrets and fruitless lamentations over neglected opportunities and talents unemployed, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that the appropriate business of life is done; that you have accomplished, even as an hireling, your days; that the responsibilities of your position, as they pressed upon you in various ways, have been sustained and discharged; that you have "fought the good fight, finished your course, and kept the faith," and that now nought remains, but that your body lie down to rest in the grave, while your spirit departs "to be with Jesus, which is far better," to "enter into the joy of your Lord," and cast down the diadem which He shall place upon your brow at His footstool, saying—"To Him that hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood, and made me what I am—what I was on earth as a redeemed, regenerated sinner, what I am in heaven as a glorified, enraptured saint—"to Him be glory for ever and ever." Then listen—it is the voice of wisdom, the voice of God, that says—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

I. Now in the first place you find in the text a solemn truth propounded, a solemn announcement made. We are going to the grave—that is the first thing to which our attention is directed in this passage—“The grave whither thou goest.” This is a solemn truth; but men do not like to hear it; they do not like to be reminded of it; they do not like to have their attention directed to it; they would fain dismiss an anticipation so dark and gloomy as that which it awakens, from their minds. They know that they are going to the grave, ‘but,’ they ask, ‘why remind us of it? why torment us before our time?’ Why?—we remind you of it, that you may be prepared for it, that you may be ready when the moment comes that you must realise it, that that moment may not come upon you suddenly and unawares, and take you by surprise, and fill you with consternation and dismay, and plunge you in ruin and despair. That is why we remind you of it. Do not, then, consider me an enemy this morning, because I tell you this truth, nor call me a prophet of evil, because on this so solemn and impressive an occasion I remind you that you are going to the grave. Yes, all are going to the grave. The generations of mankind, as they have succeeded each other from the beginning, have been but as one vast funeral procession, each one following the other with certain, steady steps to the tomb. There, my brethren, must terminate—in the grave—the brightest career of usefulness or glory. The monarch, wrapped in his robes of state—the emperor, clothed in his imperial purple—the statesman, amidst all his labours for the public good—the courtier, with his cunning and intrigue—the merchant, with his speculations and his enterprise—the schoolman, with his learning—the philosopher, with his systems—the mechanic, with his skill—the poet, in his sublime reveries—the orator, with his eloquent discourses—all are going to the grave. You behold the gay, the splendid, the vast assembly convened to witness some magnificent spectacle, some wonderful display of genius and of talent. Youth, and beauty, and rank, are there; and all is life, and health, and excitement, and rapture. But, amid the applauses of the theatre, the thunder of admiration, remember, they are going to the grave. A few years more, and with regard to every one of them, it may be said with truth—“The place that knew them once, knoweth them no more for ever.” Or you go to the crowded exchange, to the mart of merchandise, to the scenes of commerce and of traffic, where men are eager and intent in buying and selling, amassing wealth, accumulating property. They say—“To-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.” Ah! who would think it—who would suppose that was not cognisant of the fact, that they are going to the grave? And then, when they are gone to the grave, whose shall these things be?

This, then, is the common lot from which there is no escape. And why is it so? The grave is a dark and dreary place; we naturally shudder at the idea of lying down in its coldness and its solitude; why must it be to every man his last house and his long home? Was he originally created for this? No. There was no grave in Paradise—not a solitary tomb in Eden. Man was not thus made to die, nor the grave originally prepared for him. But “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Ah! you that are in love with sin, and roll it as a sweet morsel beneath your tongue, remember it was sin that dug the first grave, and sin that wrought the first winding sheet, for man. But now it is “the grave whither thou goest;” for we speak to man who has dared to sin.

II. But, in the second place, if the grave be indeed a place to which all are going, there is much to be done before they reach it. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Now there is much to be done, in the first place, for yourselves. I know, my brethren, that religion is remote from selfishness; I know that it abhors and condemns everything like monopoly; but at the same time real religion knows nothing of that spurious charity which

would attend to all to the neglect of self, and seek to promote the salvation of the souls of others, whilst the man suffers his own to perish. Oh! no. The law of the Gospel, under which we live, requires a man to love his neighbour as himself, but not better than himself, nor before himself, nor above himself, nor beyond himself, still less to the neglect of himself. Every man's own soul is to him a treasury of heavenly treasures; the salvation of that soul ought to be to him "the one thing needful," and there is a most obvious and gross impropriety, a monstrous anomaly, in the idea of a man professing to interest himself about the salvation of the souls of others, whilst he is strangely and criminally neglectful of the salvation of his own. Let your first concern, then, be about the salvation of your souls, ere you go to the grave; for if you do not secure it before you go to the grave, afterward it will be impossible. But it is really a hard matter to make some people aware that they have a soul. They can hardly be made to comprehend what the soul is. *We are oftentimes charged as ministers of religion with speaking too plainly, with dwelling too much on the simplest elements of religion; but, brethren, what must we do when we have such gross and besotted ignorance, with which from time to time to deal? What multitudes are there living around us, as though they had no soul! They are unconscious of the presence, and the value, and the destiny, and the capacity, and the responsibility of the immortal spirit that dwells within them. They are conscious of no wants, they recognise no claims, but the wants, the claims of the body; and hence they are continually crying—"What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewith shall we be clothed?" and none of them saith, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" or, "what shall I do to be saved?" and how shall I "escape the wrath that is to come?" Ah! my brethren, let me impress upon you this morning, every one of you, the solemn consideration, the most momentous truth, that you have a soul—a soul that is in imminent peril—a soul that must be saved or lost for ever—a soul that is by nature under the curse and the condemning sentence of God's violated law—a soul for whose salvation He has made ample provision in the mediatorial character and work of His beloved Son—a soul whose salvation can alone be secured by faith in His mediatorial work. Oh! let me entreat you to remember this; whatever is neglected, whatever occupies a secondary place in your regard, I beseech you let the salvation of your soul be your first concern, and occupy the highest place; and, amidst the cares and bustle of active and commercial life, ever ponder the solemn appeal of the Redeemer—"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

But there is much to be done for others, as well as for ourselves. Placed at the head of a family, perhaps—I speak now to fathers and to mothers—placed at the head of a family, what solemn responsibilities does your position involve! How many are the claims of various kinds which press upon you from the domestic circle day by day, and hour by hour, the neglect of which on your part would involve the highest degree of criminality! I begin with that which is temporal. For your family you must labour with the sweat of your brow, or with the toil of your brain, that you may provide things honest for them in the sight of all men. And I know that in these days of competition and of struggle in the commercial world, and in the scenes of traffic and of trade, this involves often no small amount of anxiety and care. But yet God will crown with His blessing the labour of your hand. "Once was I young," says the psalmist, "and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." And permit me, under this article of our discourse, to remind you that you owe to your family, and those who are to survive you, a wise, a judicious, and an equitable arrangement and settlement of your temporal affairs. Every man who has property that will survive

him, is bound to make his will, and to make it upon honourable and equitable principles; not in caprice, and still less in the spirit of malevolence and of revenge, but with equity and uprightness he is bound so to arrange and settle his worldly affairs, that he may illustrate the excellence of Christian principle in the last act of his life, as well as amid its changing scenes, and save those who are to survive him from contention and litigation and strife, and the waste of property in law suits and suits in equity after he is gone.

But there are claims of a higher order, and infinitely more important, the neglect of which is pregnant with consequences eternally fatal. You are bound not to care for the salvation of your own souls merely, but to be concerned for the salvation of the souls of those who are connected with you, and over whom you have influence and control; and if you care as you ought for your own salvation, you will most assuredly be concerned for theirs. The want of such concern would be a melancholy proof that you had never, as you ought, duly sought the salvation of your own soul. Those children who surround you, look up to you for instruction; and you must provide that instruction for them by suitable teachers, by books, and by such other methods as Christian prudence and wisdom shall devise. The instructions delivered must be enforced by your own character and conduct, by the uniform illustration of a holy and a devoted life. To all your instructions and your holy example must succeed the fervour of persevering and effectual prayer; for in vain is parental instruction and holy example, unless those Divine influences be vouchsafed, which it is the province of the prayer of faith to secure and to command. Thus did the patriarchs of old send up the fervour of their petitions for heavenly grace: "*Oh! that Ishmael might live before Thee!*" And will you permit me this morning to ask whether you maintain family worship? Will you permit me to inquire whether you have an altar to God in your house? If you have not one, what is there in your family to distinguish it from a heathen one? Such families as fail to recognise God in their domestic capacity, He classes with the heathen; declaring that He will pour out all His fury "upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon His name." Nay, in this respect you are admonished and reproved even by the heathen; they had their Lares and their Penates, and they have still their household deities, to whom they offer such worship as they perform, morning and evening, in their families. Thus, according to their light, though "*the light that is in them be darkness,*" they admonish you. Go, then, if as yet you have no altar to God in your house, and build such an altar this day. If that altar has become dilapidated, let it be repaired; if it has been cast down, let it be rebuilt. Trim the fire that burns upon it. If it is languishing and ready to die, let it be kindled afresh, as with a live coal from off the altar of God; and see that it is kept burning brightly, as, morning and evening, you present your sacrifice of prayer and of praise. God has constituted you a priest in your own abode; that is the altar at which it behoves you to minister. See, then, that you are diligent in the performance of its duties, in the discharge of its functions; and He that heareth and answereth prayer will listen to your petitions and grant your requests.

Then, while there is much to be done for yourselves and much to be done for your families, there is much to be done for God. The cause of the poor and of the needy, of the ignorant, of the miserable, and of the wretched round about you, God has condescended to make His own, and He is calling upon you, according to the talents which He has committed to your trust, and the opportunities with which you are furnished, to serve Him and to be a worker together with Him in administering instruction and relief. Look around you and see what is presented. Are there no hungry to be fed? Are there no naked to be clothed? Are there none penetrated with the winter's cold, upon whose desolate hearth you may kindle a blaze of fire? Look around you. Are there none in ignorance whom you may instruct? Oh! how

many ! Then there is the Sunday school, and the Infant school, and the Adult school, and the daily school, and the Ragged school, and I know not how many kinds of schools, all ready to enjoy your agency and instrumentality in promoting the great cause of instruction and chasing away the thick gloomy ignorance that broods upon the people. What is it that keeps you back, that makes you hesitate ? Is it love of ease ? That is criminal indulgence ; for “ none of us,” says the apostle, “ liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself ; but whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.” Living or dying we are His ; we are not our own property, and we are, therefore, not justified in such self-indulgence. What is it that makes you hesitate ? Is it diffidence ? Is it a fear that you have not talent for this work ? Happily there is scarcely any talent so scanty but what it may find, in some one department or other in the great movement of Christian benevolence which is at the present day prevailing, a proper and appropriate channel for its influence and its exercise. It does not require very splendid talent to be useful. After all, the great thing wanting is a sincere and earnest desire to do good. And remember, that God requires of a man, not according to what he has not, but according to what he has ; and if you, with your half-talent—we will call it so just to meet your humble estimate of yourself—I say, if you, with your half-talent, make that a whole one, or with your one talent, make that one two by your diligence and devotedness to your work, your conduct shall be acknowledged and recompensed as truly as that of the man who, with his five talents, makes them ten. Bear this in mind, and remember there is to be no limit to your benevolent wishes, efforts, and influence, except that which your own ability has placed. They must comprehend within their ample range the whole human race, the entire family of man. The field is the world ; the vineyard is the globe. That field, that vineyard, you are to cultivate according to the best of your ability and the extent of your influence. The whole world being your sphere of action, every inhabitant of it is your neighbour ; and so far as you can reach him, and he is in necessity, whether temporal or spiritual, you are bound to render your assistance. Do not say with Cain, the wretched Cain, the first of murderers, and seek to soothe your conscience with the appeal, “ Am I my brother’s keeper ?” Yes, you are your brother’s keeper ; you must give account of your brother, as well as of yourselves, to God.

III. Then I observe, in the third place, that whilst we are going to the grave, and there is much to be done before we reach it, there should be a fixed and definite purpose and plan with regard to all we find to do. I think this idea is involved in the remarkable expression in the text, “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.” You look abroad and see the fields of labour open to you. They are accessible ; they invite you to enter in ; and the fields are white unto the harvest. The grain is ripe, and it is waiting for the reaper’s sickle, and your “ hand findeth” it “ to do.” There it is waiting for your occupation. You contract the survey, and look at home. You see your children rising up around you, passing through one stage after another, from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to maturity. They are clustering like olive branches around your table, and a tendinous vine round about your heart. They must be trained and pruned and carefully cultivated, or else, without such training, wild and deadly will be the fruit you bear. Now your “ hand findeth” it “ to do.” There it is ; it waits for your occupation. It is in your neighbourhood, the immediate neighbourhood where you dwell. What ignorance, what vice, what misery ; to be instructed, to be reformed, to be relieved ! You “ find” it “ to do.” There it is ; it waits for you, it cries powerfully to you by its present necessity. Like the man of Macedonia, you may see miserable, neglected beings in every street, as it were, and almost at

every door, crying, "Come over and help us;" help us, teach us, instruct us, relieve us, comfort us, do something kindly for us, for we stand in danger, we are ready to perish.

And, then, your conscience sanctions the object and seconds the appeal, and in this sense also you "find" it "to do." It is laid upon you that you should do it, as matter of duty; and to him that knoweth to do good and faileth to do the good he knows, to him it is sin. There is your Master's will. The Bible has told you, conscience tells you, that it is His will. If you refuse to do it, how many and how heavy the stripes with which you shall be beaten! There is a voice saying to you, now, on this the first Sabbath of the new year, "Son, go work in My vineyard to-day;" go work in My vineyard this year; go work with greater diligence and zeal than you have ever yet displayed; go, and I will pay thee thy wages. And see that thou do it well.

For "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," thou must "do it with thy might." It must be done in every case promptly. There must be no delay. Set your hand at once to the plough; set your house at once in order. There may be reasons for it, of the most cogent nature, and such as you, perhaps, are not aware of. You may have been negligent in the past, and the time that remains to you may be very short; and now that the evening of life is coming, you have got the work of the day to do. It is coming on. The last, the eleventh hour, will soon be here. Loitering, then, is most unseasonable, most criminal, and may be most fatal.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," then, "do it with thy might." Do it earnestly; for oh! the work is momentous, and it demands all your energies. Only think what issues are involved; only think what interests are concerned. You work for eternity. The painter tells you he paints for posterity, the architect tells you he builds for posterity, and the man who writes tells you he writes for posterity. You work for eternity—eternity!—and all the momentous results of your work can only be realised in that eternity. They will never be fully known till eternity developes its awful scenes and unfolds its dread realities. Then the worth of the soul will be known; then its inestimable value will be perceived by multitudes, but, alas! too late. Oh! I beseech you, then, if you ever were in earnest about anything, be earnest about this, and earnest about it now. Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you have set about repairing and retrieving the errors and the neglects of days gone by. "Do it with thy might."

Do it constantly. There must be no rest from this labour, no cessation from this toil, but that rest, that cessation, which the powers of the body and the mind require, and that is rest that you may work, and cessation that you may labour again, with greater purpose and to greater effect. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Do it continually; be always doing it, never cease to be doing it, till you lay down alike your life and your labours in the grave, "the grave whither thou goest."

I feel a deep solemnity coming over my own spirit at this time. What a veil rests upon the future! We have seen the commencement of another year—who shall see its close? and when its close shall come, as come it will, where shall we be? Shall we live on earth to see its close? or shall we witness its close with the intelligence which shall be conveyed to us or the knowledge which shall be afforded to us when we are inhabitants of eternity? and will that eternity itself be an eternity of bliss or an eternity of woe? Oh! what a thought! May God impress this solemn consideration on every heart, and quicken each of us, so that whatsoever we find to do we may do it with our might, seeing that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither we are going."

LET US NOT SLEEP.

A Sermon,
BY THE
REV. THOMAS BINNEY.

PREACHED IN THE WEIGH HOUSE CHAPEL, FISH STREET HILL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 14, 1849.

"The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."—1 Thess. v. 2—6.

"THIS year thou shalt die:" we meditated last Sunday night upon that passage; directing your attention to a very affecting providence—the sudden death of a young man, cut down in the flower of his days, on the first day of the year—and endeavouring to gather from the event such reflections as might impress the text which we took upon your hearts; and we tried to bring home to you the probability, nay, the certainty, that some of you who composed the congregation then, and of course some of you who compose the present congregation, "this year shall die." We made a calculation, founded upon the population of the metropolis and the weekly bills of mortality, which you can see in the papers every week—that, taking the population at two millions, and the mortality at a thousand a week, you get, by an easy process, the fact that twenty-six out of every thousand die in a year. Of course allowance must be made for a congregation like this, which we might call a picked assembly, where we have neither the very young nor the very old, and the contingencies and probabilities are therefore in your favour; but if we take the average at ten, or even eight, and allow all the rest for the probabilities in your favour, it is a dead certainty that out of the eight hundred or a thousand people that are here to-night—living men and women, in the vigour of health and (it may be) youth—some of them "this year shall die." I was much struck lately in reading the first volume of Mr. Macaulay's "History of England," where there is an exceedingly interesting chapter, in which he contrasts the condition of England rather more than a century and a half ago with the present: and he says, that the mortality in London is now only one in forty, whereas in the year 1685 it was one in twenty-three. So that with all the fright that we sometimes put ourselves in about our courts, and alleys, and drains, and a thousand other ills that are so many conspirators combined against the health and life of the metropolis in the present age, all of which may be perfectly true, such is the improvement in our physical health and condition, that the difference between London now and London a century and a half ago, is just the difference between London in an ordinary state of health and London in the time of the cholera. But in spite of all this, and calculating not by the former status of mortality but by the present, the statement of the text is a positive certainty, and there are some here to whom it may with truth be said—"This year thou shalt die."

Dear brethren, "suffer the word of exhortation." Let us spend a few minutes to-night in just meditating again on something that may be befitting

our position and prospects; and "*let us not sleep*, but let us watch and be sober."

Many thoughtless and irreligious men think they live in a manner which is the furthest off from sleeping possible, and imagine that to designate them persons that are asleep is the most absurd of all figures. Now I admit that these may certainly be in a perpetual fever, bustle and activity; and yet it may be a true thing, spiritually speaking and religiously considered, that they are like men who sleep. So that we must keep in mind, while we are making two or three observations to show that a worldly, irreligious man is just in the state in which we are exhorted not to be, that it is in relation to his spiritual life that we are to take the figure; and let us see whether it does not hold good.

Of course, when a man is asleep he is in a state of inactivity. He does not—we do not expect him to do anything. There may be fifty duties around his bed, all crying to him, 'Take hold of me, and do me'—but he does none of them. You no more expect an act of accomplishment from the sleeping, than you do from the dead. Now whatever may be the passionate, fervid life of a godless man, yet with respect to God, and prayer, and intercourse with Heaven, and preparation for eternity, and all the great and religious duties of life which men ought to do, he does nothing; and the Scripture says, that he is not only asleep, but dead. I care not what may be his intellectual activity—his ardent pursuit of knowledge—his various sensations of enjoyment,—all that has to do only with the mere surface of his nature; with regard to spiritual things he is like a man asleep.

I need hardly say, that a man asleep, as the poet says, "with his senses steeped in forgetfulness," with all the apertures and avenues by which he has perception and consciousness of the external world closed, is unconscious of all that is around him. He may be asleep in the sunshine; he may be lying there, on a bank of breathing beauty and fragrance; he may be surrounded on all sides with the most splendid and gorgeous scenery of earth; there may be over him the bright blue sky, and the sun in his flaming chariot; yet he sees nothing—he is utterly unconscious of it all. He may be lying asleep in a room, with the curtains drawn from his window and from his bed, when the everlasting lamps of heaven are lighted up, and we may behold the glowing scenery which might well fill us with wonder, and would do so every night, if it were not so familiar to us; but he sees nothing. So that whatever be the external circumstances in which a man may be asleep, he is utterly unconscious of them. And I mean to say, spiritually speaking, that this is the condition of the sinner. Ah! my brethren, the man that has a religious faith in him, sees that God has surrounded him by another creation; but this is for ever shut out from the sight of the godless and the sensual. And what a world that is! Talk of the scenery of earth, with its verdure—talk of the sky, with its sun and stars; what are they to the stars and the suns of the intellectual firmament? what are they to the glories of the universe of truth—that universe which is revealed to man's soul by God's revelation, "the eyes of his understanding being enlightened," so that by religious faith he is enabled to discern all its wondrous light and scenery? But the worldly and the sinful have their whole souls closed and made insensible to all these spiritual things—just as a man asleep is insensible to all that is material in the world around him. "*Let us not sleep, as do others.*"

I think another thing will strike you. They that sleep dream, and are therefore liable to be affected, and often very deeply affected, by the unsubstantial or the untrue. A sluggard in his sleep would perhaps dream that he is very rich and prosperous, has an abundant harvest, his fields in admirable condition, his barns filled with plenty, and his presses running over with fresh wine. A man hungry and in rags may dream that he is clothed as gor-

geously as a king, and that he is partaking of a banquet like that set out by the king of Babylon. The most absurd, grotesque, unsubstantial visions may flit over the sleeper, and be to him for a time as affecting as the realities of life. Or he may be disturbed by opposite things—visions of another sort—dreams of terror, equally unsubstantial. And there is truth in the application of all this to worldly men, men neglectful and ignorant of religion. They will often be agitated by superstitious terrors; their very ignorance of religion will become to them a positive and operating evil. But principally they dream after another fashion—like those to whom Christ alludes in the book of Revelation—fancying that they are “rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,” while they are in reality “poor and miserable and blind and naked.” The worldly man goes on, fearing nothing, because he is utterly unconscious of the actual condition of his nature and of his real relationship to God. Ah! they that sleep dream; and there is nothing so absurd as the dreams of irreligious dreamers—ay, and of religious dreamers, too, thinking they have enough of religion, and resting satisfied with repeating their creeds and telling us their doctrines.

But there is another idea. Sleep is sometimes produced by indulgences that make the sleep heavy. “Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are *drunken* in the night.” The man sleeps because he is drunk—because he is under the influence of grossness and sensuality. And when men sleep in this manner, it is very difficult to wake them: loud noises, the report of a pistol, shaking them violently, and a variety of other things will not wake them: and if you should succeed in waking them, there is a strange mixture of consciousness and insensibility, and they are snappish, violent, irritable, enraged with those who wake them, and want to go to sleep again. Now is there anything upon earth more adapted to represent to us the real condition of some of the grossly sensual? Their souls within them are drugged and drenched with grossness and sensuality; they are in a deep sleep. Startling providences, (such as a death occurring at their very door, or an arousing sermon that by chance they may have heard,) which make the deepest impressions upon others, make none upon them; and if some benevolent Christian man takes them by the arm, holds them fast, will speak and make them hear, they will be irritable and vexed, and consider the interference a kind of insult; their conscience may be touched and probed for the moment, but they throw the man off and go to sleep again. You know this is often the case, Men go on sleeping, “saying, Peace and safety,” and by constant neglect of their religious and spiritual nature closing their hearts against the Gospel and against God, they get into a state of complete hardihood—their consciences being “scared as with a hot iron,” and their sleep getting deeper and deeper; and “when they are saying, Peace, peace, sudden destruction cometh upon them.” The cry is heard—“The day of the Lord cometh”—the hour of death, the closing of this period of probation; their account must be given in; “in a moment, when they think not, the Son of Man cometh;” and lo! “destruction cometh upon them as a woman with child, and they shall not escape.” Now, brethren, “let us not sleep” like these men; “let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.”

I feel that I cannot speak of the whole of this congregation in the way that the text and the verses about it speak to these Thessalonian converts. Those converts had been converted under very peculiar circumstances—circumstances which almost made it a positive certainty that every one of them was really in earnest. They had been cast out of the synagogue—they had already suffered persecution—they had caused a riot to be raised in the city. So that to most of them the apostle could with truth say—“Ye are all the children of the day; ye are not the children of night, nor of darkness; therefore, ye are

not to sleep as do others." But I cannot say this to all of you ; circumstances are very different with you. The mere fact of your being here, even regularly and habitually, does not of itself prove that you are earnest and spiritual men ; your attention to Christian instruction, and even your connection with a Christian church, do not necessarily, as in the primitive age, imply thorough wakefulness and earnestness. The entire half of a congregation called Christian may be asleep ; so that we can only say to half of them—" Do not sleep like the other half." You that indicate something of real spiritual life, do not act like those who profess themselves Christians, but are asleep in worldliness and sin, and it may be in sensuality. Brethren, God only knows your hearts. I can make no distinction between you men and women—very respectable, sitting here with great decorum, and as far as I can tell one as good as another ; God only knows who of you are " the children of the light and of the day," and who of you are " the children of the night and of darkness," in the flesh and in your sins, asleep, peradventure, and dreaming dreams very much opposed to the realities of the truth of God.

If we had time, it might be edifying to point out a variety of reasons why you Christians ought not to " sleep as do others," in all churches and in congregations of every sect—as those do who are asleep in their worldliness and in their sins. You profess to be " children of the day"—to be awake—to have had your eyes opened—to have seen the spiritual universe of God's truth, and to be every day under the influence of that principle which gives substance to the shadow, and nearness to the distant, and reality to the unseen ; you profess to be partakers of the Divine nature, to which sleep is an impossibility, and which delights in work, in activity, in " the light" and in " the day ;" and there are a thousand reasons why *you* should not " sleep as do others ;" but I just want to say—Do you not think that we might make the thing to bear upon every one of you ? And seeing that you have had the fact twice urged upon you, mathematically made out, that there is a probability arising to a positive certainty, that some in this place will die this year, may not all of us mortal men take the matter home to ourselves and say—Since we have had this truth urged upon our hearts and understandings at the beginning of this year, as thousands and tens of thousands have not, therefore " let us not sleep" as they do, " but let us watch and be sober ?" " They that sleep, sleep in the night ; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night." Negligence, thoughtlessness, indulgence, sensuality—these are the things which drown men in sleep, and in destruction and perdition. Mark the two things that you Christian people are to attend to ; not to " sleep," but to " watch," to be awake, " and be sober ;" guarding against all indulgences, all sensualities, all temptations that would give the animal and inferior nature a predominance over the spiritual and godlike. " Watch and pray," says the apostle in another place ; " watch unto prayer." Be wakeful that you may pray, and pray earnestly that you may have grace to keep awake. You must not " sleep"—for you are in circumstances in which there are peculiar temptations ; you need all your eyes open—for " Satan as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour," and he has all *his* eyes open. " We are not ignorant," says the apostle, " of his devices"—his snares, his nets, his meshes, his pits by the road-side, covered over so that we cannot easily see them ; and we would have you " walk as in the day," careful and vigilant, that you may be aware of temptation, overcome the tempter, and be marching on manfully and wakefully ; so that if the Master cometh suddenly, He may find you watchful.

I do not go into the question about the coming of the Lord, as we read in this epistle, because I do not think it is for our edification. The people at Thessalonica seem to have so misunderstood the apostle, that he had to write to them a second letter to explain the misunderstanding. They took his

words to mean, that they were to expect Christ to come in the clouds every day—that they did not know any hour when they went to bed at night, that He might not be visible in the clouds in the morning—or that when they walked abroad on God's earth they might not see a bright spot in the sky, which should enlarge until it became the revelation of the Son of Man. We do not go into this ; it is enough for you to know, that if this year one of you die, you will find that your manifestation before Christ and your appearance as a spirit in the world of spirits will be all the same with the revelation of Christ to you in the body ; it will be as really “the day of the Lord,” and it may come to you as suddenly, even “as a thief in the night.”

My brethren, let us lay these things to heart. It is very affecting to think that there are so many people asleep, and asleep “in the light and in the day”—that there are people who go to churches and chapels habitually, hear the Scriptures read and the minister preach, and yet have no more real perception of the spiritual realities which are uttered, than a man that is asleep, has of the realities of the material universe. I have often been brought into contact with persons who have all their lives been closely connected with what might have taught them better, but who have been utterly ignorant of some of the most simple scriptural terms. I have been called to visit such persons on their death-bed, or in sickness and distress. The phrasology of religion was to them just like a language which they did not understand ; they were asleep, and asleep in “the light.” Alas ! alas ! there are persons who sleep in the light, as well as those who sleep in the dark. And it is very affecting, that a great many good people only perceive half the truth—that there are many who do not see spiritual things clearly—to whom the beautiful universe of truth which God has revealed, and which is beautiful in His sunlight, is a perpetual eclipse, from the feebleness, the scantiness, the imperfection of their conceptions.

Let us terminate our meditations by just thinking, that it is quite possible for you to sleep here, notwithstanding all that we say ; the flesh and the world and the devil may be far stronger than all the preacher's words ; you may go on sleeping : but there is no sleep in hell. There is no sleep either in heaven or hell. In heaven, they do not want to sleep ; and in hell, they cannot sleep if they would. “Where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth ;” “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Everlasting wakefulness. And in heaven there is no night—no necessity for repose, but eternal day, ceaseless activity—vigour that never can be fatigued, songs that are never interrupted. Ah ! brethren, hearken to the word of exhortation : “Rise, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God, and Christ shall give thee light.”

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. RICHARD ALLIOTT, LL.D.

PREACHED IN CASTLE GATE MEETING-HOUSE, NOTTINGHAM,
ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1848,

In commemoration of the Jubilee of the Sabbath Schools connected with the Chapel.

"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."—Leviticus xxv. 9, 10.

THE Old Testament dispensation was typical, and hence all its observances had an important spiritual signification. Accordingly, that dispensation deserves to be studied by Christians, not merely because of the Divinity of its origin, but because of its relation to New Testament truths. From the type we may learn something of the antitype; the shadow may throw some light on the substance; the representation may afford important instruction with regard to the thing represented.

The jubilee is not the least interesting nor the least significant of the observances of the Mosaic law. To this observance I propose to call your attention this morning, first, whilst I describe the manner in which it was accustomed to be celebrated; and, secondly, whilst I show what I conceive to have been its spiritual significance.

I. First, let us attend to the manner in which it was accustomed to be celebrated.

The "jubilee" was emphatically a sabbatical year. There were different Sabbaths amongst the Israelites; first, there were Sabbath days, including not merely the seventh day Sabbath, but also the first and last days of their great festivals, which were also called Sabbaths; secondly, there were sabbatic years; every seventh year was sabbatical, and so was the jubilee which followed every seventh sabbatic year, and was, therefore, so to speak, a Sabbath of Sabbaths. Seven times seven years, then, rolled along, and the fiftieth year was the year of jubilee. The day on which it was to be proclaimed was the tenth day of the seventh month—*Tishri*—nearly corresponding to our October; that was the annual day of atonement. Accordingly, the jubilee was ushered in by the previous observance of the usual expiatory rites of that hallowed day. The bullock was slain by the high priest for his own sins, and the goat for the sins of the people, and their blood was taken by him into the most holy place, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat; then, having confessed the sins of the people over a second goat, called the scape-goat, the priest, by the laying on of his hands, symbolically transferred the sins which he had confessed to the goat, and the goat thus emblematically bearing their sins was sent away with them into the wilderness. These and other rites being performed, the people were symbolically cleansed from sin; and those who looked from the sign to the thing signified, rejoiced in the forgiving love of their God. And now a trumpet sounds—it sounds long and loud; it is the trumpet proclaiming the jubilee. It proclaimed a Sabbath—a rest; a rest to the land, which was to lie fallow as in other sabbatical years—and it proclaimed a rest, too, to many a weary labourer, to many distressed at the alienation of their paternal inheritance, and to many oppressed by the burden of debt. For, first, there were slaves in Israel. Some had sold them-

selves and their families, in order that with the purchase-money they might pay debts which they had incurred ; some, again, had become slaves in consequence of theft, or other crime ; and some had been made to serve by creditors, who took their service in lieu of their money. No Hebrew, indeed, excepting those who had bound themselves to perpetual servitude, was obliged to serve longer than six years ; but whether the six years had elapsed or not, or whether the servitude was perpetual or not, the year of jubilee was a year of release to all. Further, the Hebrews, as well as others, were subject to the vicissitudes of fortune—and hence, between the jubilee years, many a Hebrew family had exchanged wealth for poverty, and been compelled to part with the inheritance handed down from its ancestors ; but, excepting that that inheritance were a dwelling in a walled city, the jubilee restored the property which had been alienated : it was only sold, it could only be sold, till the year of jubilee. There was yet another class benefitted by the jubilee—a class consisting of those who, through losses, perhaps even through extravagance or imprudence, had become loaded with debt, and though they had not been compelled to sell themselves for its liquidation, the debt oppressed their spirits, and seemed an insuperable obstacle to their future prosperity ; but the year of jubilee wiped away every debt, cancelled every pecuniary obligation, and left men free from the burden by which they had previously been weighed down. Nor was there any injustice to the creditor in the law which thus, every fiftieth year, destroyed his further claim ; for the debt was incurred with that understanding, and he knew beforehand the consequences, if within the specified period it were not paid. Does the jubilee trumpet proclaim a rest to all these classes ?—how joyful the sound, how sweet its music, to those in hard service, wearying of forced labour ! how joyful its sound, how sweet its music, to those who had been filled with deep melancholy and grief at the loss of their fathers' fields and vineyards ! how joyful the sound, how sweet its music, to those whom heavy debts had laid low in the dust ! Methinks I see a family, as the trumpet blows, and proclaims "liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound." That family had, since the last jubilee, become very poor, and had been, a few years ago, sold for debt to a rich sojourner in Israel. They had possessions then, and were happy in their possessions ; but now these have been all alienated from them, and been enjoyed by a stranger. They had full freedom then, and they loved their freedom ; but of late they have been compelled to labour for another, and their liberty has left them. They have often yearned after by-gone days—have often cast a wishful eye on past prosperity, past liberty, their loved inheritance which they have lost. The parents, in particular, have longed to look once more on the hallowed spot of many endeared associations—the spot where their fathers dwelt, the spot where they themselves had spent many a happy year. Ah ! do not their countenances beam with a delight to which of late they have been strangers, when they first hear the trumpet of the jubilee sounding ? It tells them that they are servants no longer ; and can they help rejoicing in restored liberty ? It tells them that their family lands are again their own ; and can they help rejoicing, as they prepare to visit a long-lost home, and an inheritance more valuable in their estimation than the whole country besides ? With what joy and gratitude do they set out on their journey to their old dwelling-place ! It may be that they have many miles to travel ; but though the way be hilly, and some parts of it rugged, they cheerfully hasten along ; for they are going to renew pleasant recollections, and to retaste lost enjoyments. Shall we follow them to their former abode ? Shall we witness the tears of delight which flow from the eyes of the pious parent when he catches the first distant glimpse of the scene of his childhood ? Shall we accompany him through his house, his fields, his vineyard, the surrounding neighbourhood, and sympathise with his joy as he finds them the very same, in all their characteristics, which they were in former years ? Shall we stand by, whilst calling his wife and his children to his side, he bows with them

before his Father and his God, giving thanks especially for the jubilee year, and for the blessings which that year has conferred upon him and his? To him

"How sweet the tinkle of the palm-bower'd brook,
And dear the fig-tree shade,
'Neath which, on Sabbath eve, his father told
Of Israel, from the house of bondage freed,
Led through the desert to the promised land.
With eager arms the aged stem he clasps,
And with his tears the furrow'd bark bedews;
And still, at midnight hour, he thinks he hears
The blissful sound that brake the bondman's chains,
The glorious peal of freedom and of joy."

Can we witness this happy family, can we remember that there were many such families every jubilee, can we recollect that the jubilee brought happiness not only to families but also to distressed individuals, without admiring the institution as an evidence of the kindness of our God, and of His compassion for the afflicted?

But the jubilee was not only a Sabbath because it brought rest with it, but because it gave rise to many devotional feelings and to special devotional exercises; it was a hallowed and a holy year. Its return was in itself calculated to lead the thoughts of every Israelite to that God who had made so gracious a provision for the unfortunate. Besides, the rich supply of corn gathered in the forty-eighth year, which rendered it unnecessary to sow the land for two successive years—both the ordinary sabbatical year and the jubilee year which immediately followed, would teach the doctrine of a special providence—would teach that God was watching over them, and was as well able to provide for them out of the ordinary way as He was in it. There would be, doubtless, during the year many extraordinary assemblies for instruction, thanksgiving and praise. We know that in every sabbatical year there was to be a special reading of the law, and we may fairly presume that in the year which was a Sabbath of Sabbaths there would be at least as much done in the way of devotion and instruction as in an ordinary sabbatical year, perhaps far more.

See, then, a pious Israelite when the jubilee year returns. We will suppose him to be advanced in life, and to remember well the period when the last jubilee was proclaimed. Does not the return of the season lead him to review the past, to remember the way in which the Lord his God has been leading him since the close of the last jubilee? He looks back with grateful emotions on all the dealings of His providence, and with the deepest humility and self-abasement on his own many sins and shortcomings. He resorts to the house of prayer, that there he may erect his Ebenezer that his life has been spared, his afflictions removed and sanctified, and that he sees another jubilee year. He confesses too his transgressions unto the Lord, and the Lord forgives him the iniquity of his sin, and he renews his solemn dedication of himself and of all that he has to the Divine service. It is with this spirit that he offers every appointed sacrifice, and observes every instituted rite. To him it is a spiritual jubilee. His spiritual debts are cancelled; his spiritual enjoyments restored; his spiritual bondage broken. It is with delight that he goes to listen to the special reading of the law of his God, for that law is sweet unto his taste, yea, sweeter than honey to his mouth. Would that the jubilee had been thus observed by every Israelite! But, alas! the bulk of the nation were not spiritual Israelites! The people at large had forsaken Jehovah in heart, and numbers of them outwardly, so that His true people amongst them became very few. Still He in every age reserved to Himself a people, however few they might be, and all such looked upon the jubilee not merely as an institution for the temporal benefit of the land, but also for its spiritual profit.

So much for the manner in which it was accustomed to be celebrated.

II. I proceed, then, to show what I conceive to have been the spiritual significance of the institution.

The expiatory rites performed on the day when the jubilee was proclaimed, were, as many of you are aware, typical of the great expiatory sacrifice offered by our Lord Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of the bullock and of the goat for sin prefigured His sacrifice of Himself when He died once for all, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." The sprinkling of the blood by the high priest in the holiest of all, signified the presentation of the New Testament sacrifice in the true holy place, heaven itself, where Christ, after His crucifixion, appeared before the Father as a Lamb that had been slain. The symbolical carrying away of sin into the wilderness by the scape-goat signified the glorious results of that sacrifice which the preceding rites had prefigured; for, through that offering our sins are removed from us far as the east is from the west.

Brethren, the blood of the bullock and of the goat could never take away sin; it could only prefigure a better sacrifice by which sin could be really expiated. But the blood of Jesus Christ, that better sacrifice, is sufficient, is all-

sufficient to cleanse from sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin." Shall we not then say, in the language of the apostle, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift?" Shall we not then adore and praise His name because "He has made Him to be a sin-offering for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?"

Further. When the expiatory rites were performed the jubilee trumpet was blown—and was not a great trumpet commanded to be blown after the offering of the New Testament sacrifice? "Go (said our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples) into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And was not the preaching of the Gospel as the sound of a trumpet, and like the ancient jubilee trumpet proclaiming good tidings of great joy? To those who with the ear of faith listen to this Gospel trumpet, it proclaims three blessings, resembling indeed the three ancient jubilee blessings, but so much greater and more glorious as to be firmly regarded as their true antitype. I have said that at the ancient jubilee debts were cancelled, but the Gospel trumpet proclaims the cancelling of far heavier debts, debts incurred by transgression against God, debts subjecting us to the eternal prison of hell, and the unutterable misery of the damned: it proclaims a release—a free and full release from all these debts—the forgiveness of all manner of sin and iniquity—a forgiveness not for money, not for price, but simply as a gracious, a wholly unmerited gift—the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I have said that at the ancient jubilee, the yoke of servitude was broken, but the Gospel trumpet proclaims deliverance from a much worse yoke—the yoke of bondage to sin and Satan. We have all, as it were, sold ourselves to this enemy of God and man, and he is a hard master, nor are we able to free ourselves from his service: he has cast a chain about us; he leads us captive at his will, and whilst we follow the chain becomes tighter and tighter—so tight and so firm, that to man it seems impossible to be broken. But from this chain, however tight, however strong it be, liberty is proclaimed to the captive. The Gospel preaches a Saviour who can make us free; and "if He make us free, we are free indeed." He has ascended on high, and received from His Father the promised Spirit to bestow as He will; and that Spirit, wherever He bestows it, breaks asunder the heaviest chain which the devil has ever been able to forge—that Spirit delivers from his kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, and translates into that of God's dear Son. I have said, too, that the jubilee year in olden time gave back his father's possessions to him who had sold or lost them; in like manner the Gospel trumpet proclaims the restoration of the paradise given by God to our first parent Adam, but which by his transgression he lost to his posterity—nay, it proclaims the gift of a better paradise than that—of a paradise of which that was only the type and symbol—a paradise in the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb—a paradise having the glory of God, where His servants see His face, and dwell at His right hand, where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore. The Gospel trumpet, then, proclaims spiritual blessings like to, though far more glorious than, the temporal blessings proclaimed by the Jewish jubilee trumpet; it proclaims the cancelling of debts; the deliverance of those who have sold themselves to servitude; the restoration of alienated possessions. Accordingly, if the ancient trumpet was a joyful sound, the Gospel trumpet, to those who have ears to hear, is still more joyful, because of the greater value of the blessings proclaimed. See a poor sinner brought to see his guilt and his helplessness. His iniquities burden his conscience; because of the weight of them he labours and is heavy-laden. He is conscious of his bondage, and of his own inability to deliver himself from it. He knows that he has lost all claim to hope of an inheritance in heaven. He is ready to give himself up to despair. Ah! behold this miserable sinner as he eagerly and believingly listens to the Gospel trumpet proclaiming Jesus, and the blessings treasured up in Jesus. He believes, and who can describe his joy? His burden is taken away; his soul is set at liberty; a lively hope, of which he knew nothing before, is conferred upon him of an inheritance in heaven. Such is his emotion, such his joy, that he can sing from the bottom of his heart—

"Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love."

My dear friends, does this answer to your experience? Whether your eyes have been opened to see it or not, whether your soul has been moved to feel it or not, you are every one deeply guilty in the sight of God, and utterly helpless. Do you see and feel it, or do you not? Till you know that you are sick, you will be indifferent to the news of a physician; till you are convinced that you are lost you will not care to be found; till you are conscious that you

need the Gospel, and that without it you must perish, the Gospel trumpet will not be to you a joyful sound. Blessed be God, that if yet careless there is a mighty power which can rouse you, which can convince you of sin. That power is almighty ; it is the power of the Holy Ghost. He can humble you ; He can show that "you are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked." He can give you to cry out with anguish of spirit, 'I deserve the deepest hell, I am on the way to unutterable torment ; "what, what must I do to be saved?"' Ah ! and if you are only thus influenced, there will be no sound sweeter to you than that of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God"—a sound proclaiming pardon, sanctification, eternal life, as freely bestowed on all who come to God by Christ. "Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance."

The Gospel trumpet proclaiming spiritual blessings analogous to those proclaimed at the ancient jubilee is, then, one great antitype of the jubilee trumpet of olden time. But there is a second fulfilment of the type, and one in some respects more full, more perfect, than even that to which I have directed your thoughts. The ancient jubilee was not proclaimed till the high priest had not only slain the sacrifice but had completed his intercession and returned from the most holy place, where he had presented the blood and had pleaded the cause of sinners before the mercy-seat. And there will be a great jubilee proclaimed when our great High Priest, having finished His work before the throne of God, returns to earth "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." The trumpet of the most glorious jubilee this earth ever witnessed will sound then. It will sound long and loud, and its sound will be yet longer and yet louder, and oh ! how joyful the sound to every true believer—both to the dead who have died in the Lord, for it will be heard even in the grave, and also to those who are alive and remain to the coming of Christ ! To both it will proclaim three great jubilee blessings ; first, the cancelling of the great debt of nature, so that those who are in prison for that debt will be released, and those who had been anticipating the stroke which would also imprison them will be changed, made immortal, be delivered from the execution of the sentence, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." What is denominated now the debt of nature will be a debt no longer ; the debt will be set aside. Secondly, the trumpet of that day will proclaim deliverance from bondage—the bondage of corruption, the bondage of the grave. The last enemy which now brings all sooner or later under his power, will be swallowed up in victory, and the song of triumph and liberty will be sung by those whom he had long enslaved. "O death, where is now thy sting ; O grave, where is now thy victory ;" "this corruptible body has put on incorruption, this mortal has put on immortality." "Thanks be unto God who has given us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And the last great trumpet also proclaims not merely the promise of paradise restored, but the bestowment of the inheritance ; it proclaims the arrival of the day when the people of God shall enter into possession ; shall recover more than their first father lost ; shall receive the inheritance which is theirs as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Will not the trumpet of that day, then, be a true jubilee trumpet ? It will not, indeed, be so to all mankind, nor did the trumpet in olden day proclaim a jubilee to all who heard it. The jubilee then was proclaimed only to the fleshly descendants of Abraham, and the jubilee of which we now speak will be proclaimed only to his spiritual descendants, and to those who walk in the steps of that faith which he exercised being yet uncircumcised. Will the day, then, be a jubilee to you ? Not, excepting you now prepare to meet your God. Not without you now let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning, and you yourselves like unto men who are waiting for their Lord. If the trumpet of the Gospel be joyful to you, the trumpet of the second advent of Christ will also be joyful. If you be recipients of the blessings proclaimed by the first trumpet, you will also be recipients of the blessings proclaimed by the second. But if the Gospel trumpet be no jubilee sound to you, if you are indifferent to the blessings which it publishes, if you live in the neglect of the great salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord," then the sound of the last trumpet will be to you only a presage of wrath, a presage of despair. It will proclaim to you not liberty, but more dreadful bondage ; not a release from debt, but an imprisonment which can never terminate till you have paid the uttermost farthing ; not an inheritance restored, but one irrecoverably lost ; and in addition to that, "outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." The last trumpet is a jubilee trumpet, but it is only so to the true followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May God add His blessing ! Amen.

MAN'S FIRST DUTY.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. & REV. HENRY MONTAGU VILLIERS, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL,
ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JAN. 7, 1849.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. vi. 33.

Who really believes that this is the plain commandment of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Only let us look around us, and contemplate the sin which abounds in the world, and the unholiness which exists even in our own hearts, and then let us answer, as in the sight of God, whether we are accustomed to carry out the precept contained in the text, and to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

And yet, my brethren, we are told by many who object to the doctrine that they must be born again if they would enter into the kingdom of God, that they would prefer being addressed from the Sermon on the Mount. Or if we turn to another class of religionists, and address them from such a chapter as that which was read in this evening's service, and speak of being "justified by faith without the works of the law," we find them crying out, 'This undervalues holiness, instead of telling us how to lead a holy life and how to devote ourselves to God.'

Now I would meet boldly that class of objectors, and I would address any such that may be present, from the text which I have chosen—"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness:" and I appeal to their own consciences, whether when they demand that character of address, they are prepared to say, 'I am seeking first that kingdom, and I desire that righteousness above every else which the world can give.'

My brethren, I would venture to say, that even amongst those who really love God in this assembly, if they look back to their past lives and reflect upon their early days, they will be constrained to own that they were among the number that put off the consideration of these matters till some season which seemed more convenient to them, and that after all it was not when they were seeking God, but when God was seeking them, that they were brought out of that state of darkness, and made to attach a different value to "the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

But without occupying your time with any general remarks, I will endeavour to set before you the meaning of the passage I have read to you; and this under two heads—man's first duty, and the reward that he may expect from it.

I. His first duty, we are told, is to "seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

But before we enter into the character of that kingdom and righteousness, I would remind you, that "seeking it first" may be taken either in the sense of priority of time or excellence of value.

If we take it in the sense of priority of time, I can conceive no passage of Scripture more suitable for our meditation on the first Sunday of the new year. There are many persons who determine, at the beginning of a new year, that this change in their life, or that change in their habits and pursuits shall be made. And why is it that you and I may not come to the determination, God being our helper, that first of all we will "seek God's kingdom and righteousness?" Why should we not determine that 1849 shall be the time for increased exertion for God's kingdom?

But supposing that we take it as regards the comparative value, then let me remind you of what Job says—"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Shall we, then, be unwilling to give all that we have for everlasting life? How often do we hear of a merchant in the midst of a storm being willing to cast over all his wares, that he may lighten the ship?—and this merely for the preservation of a life which in a short time must return to the dust from which it came. How much more, then, are we called upon to value our souls, in order that we may inherit everlasting life!

But still, I desire not to dwell upon these comparisons, but rather, to point out to you that there are two things implied in that word "seek." It implies that both diligence and consideration should be used.

Diligence. In other words, that our salvation is not to be taken as a matter of course, and that we are not to mistake between the discharge of our duty and the duty itself. All of us are prepared to allow, that we should "seek it first;" but how many of us carry this out? How many persons are there in the world, who look upon the work of religion as that which is every body's business, but which nobody is called to carry out! But the text before us tells us plainly, that there is earnest work required, and that if we would be the Lord's people, we must "seek first His kingdom and righteousness."

And there should also be consideration. What a beautiful passage of Scripture that is, where we read the parable of the unjust steward! See what consideration he showed; see what a plan he adopted, in order that when he was discharged from his master's service he might be received into other men's houses, seeing that he could not dig and to beg he was ashamed. But where is that same consideration in the professing Christian? Is it not still true, that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light?" God would have every person who calls himself a Christian inquire, how and when and where he may get good for his soul. God will not let us be content with going through some outward work, without seeking inward grace; He will not be satisfied with a mere nominal Christianity, but requires that there should be a real Christianity; He will not be satisfied with a faith which is a mere confession of the lip, while there is no corresponding feeling in the heart. Therefore, when we are called here to "seek," it implies both diligence and consideration.

But what is it that we are to seek? Two things are set before us here.

1. The first is that which may be considered to be the result of the other—"the kingdom of God."

Now I will not stay to dwell upon whether our Lord Jesus Christ will come and take to Himself a kingdom and reign; I will not stay to inquire whether it will be merely a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers; but still there is one point which all interpreters must agree upon, and that is, that the text implies the seeking a personal interest in that kingdom—a *personal interest*, in comparison with which there is nothing in this world that can be esteemed of any value at all.

My brethren, is this the manner in which you are carrying out the direction of the text? Can you truly say, 'The one thing which I am craving after is a personal interest in the Redeemer's kingdom—to be enabled to say, not at the hour of death, but in the time of health and strength, "I know in whom I have believed," and am able to trust in Him for all that is needful, both for time and for eternity? It is here that you will find a large body of professors come short. They acknowledge that it is desirable to know their interest in Christ on their dying beds, but they speak of it as being presumption to inquire into this subject in the time of their health and strength. For my own part, I believe, that if religion is to be anything, it must be everything—that if we consider religion of any value at all, it is of present value, as well as of enduring value, even lasting for evermore; and that therefore, if I profess myself a Christian, I am called upon to be a Christian now—to examine, therefore, the state of my heart, to know whether it has been changed by the Holy Spirit, and to examine into the state of my life, to know whether "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."

But again: it implies also a seeking the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Now if we consider the first thought of most parents with regard to the education of their children, it is where they shall obtain the best instruction for success in this life; and if this life were the only life in which they were to live, I conceive those parents would be justified in their conduct. They inquire, too, whether there is a general tone of morality in that place of education to which they would send their children; and thus far they do well. But in neither particular do they come up to the direction of the text, which involves the first question of all—Will there be such training there as shall prepare my child for everlasting life? This I conceive to be one point in the interpretation of the text.

But even this does not imply the whole idea of seeking the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. The last sin which I believe the best of us is freed from is that of selfishness—and in nothing do we show this more than in religion; but in proportion as real religion takes possession of our hearts, must selfishness be expelled. And here I would take for a test our zeal for the missionary work, whether among Jews or Gentiles. My brethren, it is often thought that this is a subject which should be limited to sermons occasionally preached for that object; but my own belief is, that the missionary work is just as much a part of the Christian duty, and contributions to that work are quite as much a part of Christian charity, as the relief of the poor around us, or the consideration of the souls of our nearest and dearest relatives. God does not limit the duty of Christian love to a house here, or a family there; but those who live on God live for God's glory; and in what, I would ask, is God's glory so much increased as in bringing souls to Christ, that He may "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied?"

Therefore, in seeking the kingdom of God there is our personal interest in

that kingdom, the extension of that kingdom, and that which I have just briefly touched upon, the glory of that kingdom.

Now, brethren, before we pass on, let me further remind you, that the exhortation of the text is a universal one. None are too young, and none are too old to receive it; to the oldest man in this assembly and to the little boy who may be listening to the truth for the first time—to one and all does God give this command—"Seek first the kingdom of God."

2. But there is a second direction in the text: to seek "His righteousness."

This may refer to sanctification; that is, to our inward holiness, the work of God's Holy Spirit within us, "without which no man shall see the Lord." God calls upon every one of His people to aim at becoming more and more holy, more and more "conformed to the image of His dear Son." Good works, therefore, He demands; but good works never buy, never merit everlasting life. Good works, therefore, are to be diligently aimed at, but not confided in. No man can be justified by his works, nor enter heaven on account of the good things he has done here; yet we are to aim at them. The apostle Paul, in the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, declares, quoting from the Psalms, that "David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works"—without works as being meritorious. Christ's works are meritorious—His righteousness gives us a title to heaven, and as the apostle here describes it, is imputed or accounted to us; and there is no other means by which you, or I, or any other man living can enter the kingdom of God, but by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ being accounted to us—as is plainly set forth in our most scriptural articles. And therefore it was, that the apostle drew the conclusion—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. Now if we picture to ourselves a man thus seeking the kingdom of God, we shall find this reward given unto him. "All these things shall be added unto you."

And here we must for one moment turn back to the context of the passage. Our Lord was addressing His followers, and telling them that "no man can serve two masters;" "ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Therefore," He says, "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." Then He says—"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment?" And then afterwards He says—"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek"—those who answer in the present day to the name of heathen, who know nothing of the way of righteousness; "after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

This is, in fact, only the same command which is given to us in other portions of Scripture, where we are told that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." And why is it, my brethren, that any of us can hesitate to admit this promise? Let us turn and see the Lord's dealings with His people in things temporal in days of old. You will recollect, that when Solomon asked for nothing but wisdom, God said to

him, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king: wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that were before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

And is not God revealed to us in His Word as a God of love? Will He, then, allow His servants, who serve Him faithfully, to starve? No; "if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him!"

But we have a positive pledge, that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, other things will be added to us," for we have that greatest pledge of all, that "God gave us His only begotten Son." If "He spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

If, then, this view of the subject be correct, what encouragement it gives to every one of us to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness!" It tells that poor man, who may be in great care for things temporal, to care no more; but rather to seek God's kingdom, and He will take care of the rest. It tells that poor man who is struggling hard to overcome his sorrow, in order that he may then seek God, to seek God first, and He will comfort and cheer Him. And thus, take every position in life, and we shall find the same truth unfolded to us, for God is faithful to His promise; He cannot, He will not deny Himself.

But, my dear brethren, are there not among my hearers some to whom I dare not speak at this moment in the language of encouragement? I mean those careless professors who are contented with a mere nominal religion, and who have never yet given their hearts to God. Let me beseech you, my dear hearers, not to trifle with your everlasting salvation. How many triflers have there been, and how many triflers are there now in the world! It is a painful thing to stand by the dying bed of a sinner, and try to speak to him of a Saviour's love and of Christ as the pardon for sin, and the only answer you receive is, "Sir, it is too late now." Oh! it is dreadful to see him—his body racked with pain, his senses rapidly departing, and still without any clear view of the power of that Saviour. My brethren, if it has ever been your lot to witness this, (as it has been mine,) you will know that there is a cause to press upon you the subject, and to urge you not to have to find a Friend on your dying bed, or at the bar of God's judgment, but to "seek first," to seek now, to seek instantaneously, "the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

But are there not some of you, who are afraid of going too far in religion, and who speak of "enthusiasm" in religion, and of people being "righteous overmuch?" Let me ask you, my dear hearers, whether you have so far penetrated the secret recesses of your own heart as to say—"I know that I have obtained possession of the righteousness of Christ?" Now I will venture to say, that if your heart and your conscience tell you that you have obtained an interest in the righteousness of Christ, it is utterly impossible that you should continue to pursue as your first and highest object those things which can only "perish in the using."

My brethren, instead of departing, then, from the house of God this afternoon careless and thoughtless as to God's kingdom and righteousness, go away reflecting upon your condition in the sight of that God. Go and inquire for yourselves whether you will have admission into the kingdom of God ; and go and pray earnestly that God of His own infinite mercy may make you partakers of the righteousness of Christ. For sure I am, that if in sincerity of heart you seek it, you will be made a full partaker of His mercy ; you will see that Christ has indeed been made manifest in your soul ; and at that second manifestation of Jesus Christ—that manifestation when He shall come again “in the glory of His Father, and in His own glory, and with all His holy angels,” then shall you hear that same Saviour speak to you and say—“Come, ye blessed of My Father ! receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

MERCIES REMEMBERED.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 11, 1849.

"I will extol Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled. I cried to Thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever."—Psalm xxx. 1—12.

THE apostle James, in his general epistle to Christians, says—"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." That is, in everything let him acknowledge God. If he is in prosperity, let him praise God for mercies—if in adversity, let him ask God for deliverance. One of these duties is very much more frequently and generally attended to than the other. And the reason of this is instructive. The natural tendency of trouble, affliction, and distress, is in the same direction as that of true religion: it is not, indeed, of the same kind, but it is in the same direction; I mean towards God. It is natural for man, as man, when in trouble, to call upon God, whatever his views or opinions may be concerning the Being whom he addresses. A true saint in trouble calls upon the true God. Every one when in trouble calls upon God. It is the natural tendency of things; and therefore when all are in trouble together, it is extremely difficult to distinguish the true from the false. All are then looking in the same direction. A worldly family in great trouble wears to a superficial observer a religious aspect, and its members will listen both to conversation and to prayer, which at other times they would all impatiently reject. Now, on the other hand, the natural tendency of prosperity is in just a contrary direction to that of true religion. It is natural for man, as man, when in prosperity, and surrounded with comforts and enjoyments, to be so taken up with the creatures around him, as practically to forget God. A true saint in prosperity gives God thanks for His mercies. Therefore when all are in prosperity—all sorts of men—it is comparatively easy to distinguish the true from the false, because they take directions outwardly and manifestly different. In a man of God

you find the religious tendency in the midst of his highest prosperity. The church and the world use the same prayers, but not the same songs. The church, in her joy, praises God, using music as a means—the world, in its joy, praises this, that, or the other composer or performer, using music as an end. To the church music is an instrument for the high praises of Jehovah—to the world music is a science for the praise of the exquisite skill of some fellow-creature.

The psalm before us contains the words of a beautiful specimen of church music, considered in this its highest character, as aiming at the praise of God. The title informs us that this psalm had immediate connection with the dedication of the house of David—it is “a psalm and song at the dedication of the house of David.” It was imperative that every Israelite who had built a house, and prepared it for his own residence, should dedicate that house to God. So imperative was it, and to have left it undone would have been considered such an abomination, that even under the most urgent circumstances, when the men of Israel were suddenly called to war, proclamation was made in the camp, and every man who had a new house which had not yet been dedicated, was sent away from the camp, and not allowed to enter into battle. You will find this interesting fact recorded in the beginning of the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy :—“When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them : for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies : let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them ; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it ? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.” We may well believe, then, that this being so serious, constant, and national a custom, when the time came for the dedication of the house of the king, it would be conducted with all solemnity and piety, especially in the case of such a monarch as David. The occasion was a most natural one for a brief retrospect of the dealings of God with him, before he had such a house—an occasion for praise on looking back upon the Lord’s mercies—an occasion also to record his humiliation at the review of his own faults. It was a most suitable and solemn occasion for such a hymn as this ; and we find the psalm before us taking this direction. “I will extol Thee, O Lord ; for Thou hast lifted me up.” To God he gives the praise for his exaltation. The position which he then occupied was a lofty one—he had reached it through many perils—he had displayed much judgment, prudence, and discretion in the midst of his dangers—he had fled with all care and caution from the animosity of Saul—he had hid himself, as long as he could remain in Saul’s dominions, in the wilderness, in caves, and in dens, from the wrath of the king, and when driven out of his dominions altogether, and obliged to fly into those of a strange king, he had secured his safety by feigning himself insane. But to none of these devices does he refer : looking beyond them, he gives all the praise to God, by whom he had been enabled to surmount all his difficulties, and to whom he ascribes the entire result. “Thou hast lifted me up.” This Divine lifting up was very conspicuous in the case of David, because before these troubles commenced, he had been

designated by name as king—the Lord had set His choice upon him, and had announced him as king by the mouth of Samuel. Therefore in David's case the lifting up was obvious; but, though not so conspicuous, it is equally true and real in other cases; and if any one of you at this moment occupies a position in which he is crowned with mercies—if any of you are ready to say, that though you do not rise to such an elevation as David's, your position is still one in which you are crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies, with thousands of comforts of every kind, not one of which you have deserved, it is as true in your case, as it was in David's, that the Lord has placed you there. He it is who has lifted you up—He it is who has blessed all things as connected with you—your business, your families, your health, and whatsoever else contributes to your peace, comfort and enjoyment at this moment. It is all as truly His doing, as if you had known beforehand of the existence of a prophecy that thus it should be. This language, therefore, may at once be appropriated by every one of you in giving thanks to God for past mercies; and if you are in a position to enjoy those comforts with which God has surrounded you, and to maintain the position in which He has placed you—if you have talents for business, or for domestic life, or for any department of duty, on the discharge of which, the continuance of your comfort now depends, to whom are you indebted for this every day? Let me ask any professional person, male or female, among you; any one, for example, obtaining an honourable livelihood by the instruction of others; to whom are you indebted every moment for the power to conceive the meaning of the commonest words, and of communicating that meaning to the young minds around you? This is God's doing. My brethren, give Him the praise due to His name: "extol" Him, for He it is who has given you all this.

Remembering his enemies, David specifies this amongst the themes of his praise—that they had not been allowed to rejoice over him: "Thou hast not made my foes to rejoice over me." We have already, in our expositions of the preceding psalm, had frequent occasion to notice this point, which is one of very common occurrence in the thanksgivings of the psalmist. "By this," he says, "I know that Thou favourest me, that mine enemies have not triumphed over me." Now, considered as a temporal blessing, this is a very great matter. Who is there of any eminence in his station or rank of life who has not enemies? Nay, even in private life, there are few who have not enemies. To have been preserved from the malice of those enemies—to have had circumstances so ordered by the secret hand of God, that their calumnies have failed to injure your character, so that you stand unscathed in defiance of all that they have done—to know that they have not been able to gain credence for any false report, so as to damage you in general estimation—what a mercy is this! Every one of you who stands fair in society, with a good report, an unblemished character, amongst his friends and acquaintances, has reason at this moment to give God thanks, that his enemies have not triumphed over him. The object of such calumnies is to beat you down, to lower you in the opinion of others, to damage your position in society, and so to drive you to despair, and compel you to remove from the place altogether, that your enemies may triumph and say—"Ah! ah! we have him." Bless God, then, that your adversaries have not been allowed to rejoice over you. This is a legitimate source of thanksgiving to every Christian. We should accustom ourselves to consider the interference of God as taking place not merely in the direct matters of religion, but in all the affairs of life, in all those nameless coincidences which no human being can

manage or control in his own case. Why, very much depends upon the person you happen to meet to-morrow morning—upon whether you meet one person, or another, first, and what you hear first concerning yourselves. A thousand little things which are scarcely perceptible to an ordinary mind, and which you are not accustomed to meditate upon, do, in the hands of God, affect a man's position in society. I recollect reading of an excellent man of God in the last century, one of the earliest of our evangelical preachers in London, who said that he never went out in the morning, without making it a subject of prayer to God, which street he should take in his way, seeing that he might meet some person in one street, and not in another, on an interview with whom, nameless consequences might depend. Well, now, that is the sort of watchfulness which we should exercise; and when it pleases God to order things, so that we can maintain our position, and when He gives us such grace and favour in the eyes of men, that our enemies cannot triumph, their malice being transparent, and their efforts vain, we should give God thanks for this mercy. “I will extol Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.” I pray you, my dear friends, to apply this—not in malice towards your enemies—this would be the abuse of the verse. It is not that we wish them evil, but we thank God for preserving us from the evil which they intended. Then, if we have designed evil towards any one—if we can remember at this moment, that there are any who may call us enemies, and that we have devised, or intended, or wished, or planned, or circulated, evil against them to injure them, let us bear in mind that they too may be thanking God that we have not triumphed. We should remember this, and beware that we attempt no evil against any man. Pray for your enemies, if you have any; and avail yourselves of opportunities, if possible, to do them good, even though they “despitefully use you and persecute you,” that “you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”

Well, then remembering his diseases, whether of mind or of body, or both, the psalmist praises God for healing him. This is the second subject of thanksgiving. “O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast *healed me.*” There may have been a reminiscence on this occasion of some actual sickness, though I infer from the common use of the phrase by David, that it is rather a figurative way of expressing the distresses, which he had borne, or the discomforts, and the diseases of the mind, by which he had been exercised, and from which it had pleased God to deliver him. “Thou hast healed me;” “forgiving all my iniquities, and healing all my diseases,” as he expresses it in another psalm. The application of this is very plain and clear. Who amongst you is without some deliverance to record? Certainly no real Christian. Many infirmities you have struggled under and suffered from, and many deliverances you can recal, if your memories be active. “O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.” “My mind was in agitation,—I was comforted and quieted. My circumstances were in a state of disorder; I was afraid to look into them, and knew not what the end would be,—deliverance came; there was a merciful interposition, some turn in business, some interference of a friend, some help which I could not have reckoned upon.” “*Thou hast healed me.*” “At a critical period in my history, sickness laid hold of me; had it continued, I must have lost my business, my position, my occupation; my friends must have suffered, and so far as I can see, all dependant upon me must have been ruined. The Lord heard my prayer. I was healed—I was enabled to go forth again to my ordinary avocations”—“I will extol Thee, O Lord.”

Again, remembering the dangers which he had encountered, and the hairbreadth escapes which he had had when his life was in peril, he makes these also a subject of thanksgiving. "O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." There can be little doubt that he here refers to the narrow escapes which he had when he was so near being cut off by his persecuting enemy, and to the manner in which it had pleased God to interpose and rescue him. And who of much experience in the world can hesitate to join in the application of these words? I say not that you can all, or even any of you have quick and lively recollections of what are called narrow escapes for your natural life; but you have all been in some danger, some of you perhaps very sensibly; and you have all felt in peril of your spiritual life—I mean, of course, all who are alive to God. What narrow escapes, what extraordinary deliverances, have you had in a spiritual point of view! This is a theme on which every Christian can sing, recording such deliverances as are known only to himself, and the God to whom he ascribes them. "Thou hast kept me alive; that I should not go down to the pit." How often would you have ruined yourselves, if you had been left alone! How often would you have dashed your soul into hell by indulged sin, if God had not kept you, by putting some restraint upon you, by making some change of circumstances which operated upon you as a healing balm, gave you time to think, withdrew you from the vortex, so that you were enabled to perceive where you had been ready to plunge!

These are the themes of thanksgiving with which David opens the psalm on the occasion of the dedication of his house. There are certain occasions in life, which are more suitable than others for such reminiscences as these. Though indeed a Christian man ought to make such a retrospect often, occasions there certainly are which appear more suitable than others; as, for example, when any special event occurs in a family, or when, as happened so recently, we are passing from one year into another: the leaving of an old year behind and the entering on a new one afford a suitable occasion for a retrospect and for special thanksgiving, as well as prayer to God. But then, the true saint desires to have company in his praise; he delights in the glory of God and wishes it to redound through many thanksgivings; and therefore we find David inviting saints to praise with him. "Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." We have all some cause, though not the same, for praise; we may all use the same words, each heart putting up its own special ground of thanksgiving. Observe the spectacle of a great congregation of real Christians, every one, with a rapid glance at his past life, catching those particular grounds of thanksgiving which are suitable in his own case, and all uniting in using the same words. The sound is one, though the workings of the heart are many: the praise is offered to Him who sees every heart. This is the precise character of the praises of the church: "The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee;" infinite in the varieties of detail composing the themes of praise, but one in the praise itself. Oh! come, then, "ye saints of His," "sing unto the Lord," "give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." Here is one particular attribute selected, for which David calls upon the saints to give thanks. And why this one? I think the reason, as seen in the connection with what follows, is this. It is the holiness of the Lord that leads both to the chastening and to the saving of His saints. He is so holy that He cannot dwell with sin nor sin with Him; He is so faithful and true that He cannot

allow His saints to be lost. Either sin must be put out of them, or they must be put away from Him. Now they cannot be put away from Him, for He hath sworn by His holiness to save them; and, as they are not to be put away from Him, sin must be put away from them, because of His holiness. "Holiness becometh His house for ever." Therefore it is that they are troubled. Whom He loves He chastens; He scourges every son whom He receives, because He cannot receive any who are not holy. The children of men are plainly unholy; and the children of God are to the last in some measure unholy also, and therefore require to be chastened. "O ye saints of His, give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." It is holiness which is the security that you shall be holy. "Be ye holy," He says, "for I am holy," and He hath predestined you to be "conformed to the image of His Son." "Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." If He were not "the Holy One," salvation would not be worth having; for, while we desire to speak with reverence when we say that anything is impossible with God, yet the Bible tells us that some things are impossible even with Him; and seeing that His nature is what it is, we are justified in saying that He cannot make unholiness happy. To be like Him is to be holy; to be like Him is to be happy. Ye saints of His who desire to be happy, "give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness," for it is the security for your happiness. Is there anger in it? Is He "a consuming fire" in that holiness, consuming not you, but sin in you? He is indeed a "consuming fire" to the ungodly and the reprobate, but not to His saints. Is there anger in His holiness towards you? Well, there is conduct toward you that looks like anger, but it is only "for a moment." "Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." For "His anger endureth but a moment." His holy anger against sin does go forth; but then it is for your good, and it does not last long; it "endureth but a moment." "In His favour is life." Now observe the contrasts here. There can be no doubt that "anger" is here put in contrast with "favour," and "a moment" with "life." "His anger a moment," as it reads without the words inserted by the translators—"His anger a moment, in His favour life." This is the account given of God's dealings with His saints. My friends, consider, even in this world, without taking into account the greatest of all blessings, eternal life—even in this world how short, comparatively, are the troubles of saints, and how manifold the mercies and kindnesses of God! His anger does indeed bear but a small proportion in the experience of His saints, even on earth—it is but for a moment; whereas, day after day, and week after week, and month after month, and year after year, they experience His kindness, and live in His favour. "A moment" in His anger, and that moment for good—to warn them of evil and to drive them from it! Give thanks at the remembrance of these dealings of His. He will not allow you to retain the evil. I may, indeed, address some who feel that this portion of the Psalm does not apply to their case—some who for years and years have been under a cloud, as if they were the special subjects of God's anger. I have no doubt that there are cases of this kind. All general observations admit of exceptions, and the Lord's dealings are so complicated that we cannot bring them under any general rule or category: I refer, of course, to His dealings in this world. But even in such extreme cases as these, we are justified in looking higher. What, then, my afflicted friend? What is this life or the glory of it? It is but "a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away," and then in God's favour you shall have everlasting life. Take the whole of your existence into account, and though He should keep you "mourning all the day long" in this life,

though life should indeed be a cloudy day during successive years, yet is it but a little moment. "For a little moment I have scattered you, but with everlasting kindness will I gather you, saith the Lord of hosts;" and though this language is applied especially to the Jewish nation, its spirit is applicable to every one of you who is united to His dear Son. "With everlasting kindness will He gather you." So that you may truly say, "Though weeping endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." I cannot but believe that what is primarily referred to here is this life, and not the life to come; but often is the next and better life described as the morning: "The righteous shall have dominion in the morning." Though trouble should endure during the whole of this transitory existence, though there should be a life of woe, which is, I think, very rarely the case with those who suffer most, yet even in the man who has some cause of trouble hanging over him all his life, there is a certain elasticity: he has hours of ease, hours of peace, hours when he forgets his trouble, and is, as it were, sheltered under the lovingkindness and goodness of God, making his bed in sickness and comforting his heart in sorrow; even while the cloud still hangs over him, he can sometimes shake it off; and though the evening should be long, "joy cometh in the morning." "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

David then records how, in his prosperity, he had in some degree forgotten himself: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." The greatest temptation a Christian has is prosperity. The greatest difficulty which any of us have to contend against, consists in a state of uninterrupted prosperity, when all is comfortable within and around us, and all is cheering and happy in those connected with us; when our position is favourable, our character high, and we meet with admiration on all sides. Most dangerous position for a Christian! No doubt there is mercy in it, when God sees good to send it; and we should give Him thanks for it. But still there is danger in it; there is a risk, that, although we may admit in theory the uncertainty of all human enjoyments, we may yet secretly begin to claim for ourselves exemption from the common lot, and fancy that our nest is so lined that no evil can befall us, our house so strong that its foundations cannot be undermined. As soon as that sort of feeling creeps into the heart, it alienates the heart from entire dependence upon God. This carnal dependence on the stability of earthly things, is the most ungodly thing possible. Not being suspected, it is not prayed against; it creeps and insinuates itself into the thoughts of a man until it gnaws out the very heart of his religion, and of all real enjoyment of God. Beware of it. It is sometimes allowed as a punishment, sometimes as a trial. It was allowed in Hezekiah's case as a trial. Hezekiah was placed in high prosperity; and when the ambassadors of Babylon came to see the glories of Jerusalem under his reign, Hezekiah was tempted, in the pride of his heart, to show them the treasures of the Lord's house—a vain exhibition of what he possessed; and it is expressly recorded, that in that matter God left him to try what was in him. You will find this most instructive passage in the second book of Chronicles, the thirty-second chapter. You can read at your leisure the whole history; but the passage to which I refer is the thirty-first verse. "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart." Most instructive, I say, is this! If God leave any Christian man, at any period of his course, after any number of years of faithful walking with Himself—if God leave him, it is "to try him," to see what is in his heart, and

whether there be any abomination there; and in such a case our security rests in this assurance—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Now, when David was in prosperity, he said, "I shall never be moved." This carnal security was gaining access to his heart. We know what was the effect of it in one instance; we are aware, that at one period of his history, when Joab and his other captains went out to war, he remained behind in the luxurious indulgence of his state; and in his idleness, and wanton waste of time in the evening upon his housetop, he saw and coveted another man's wife. Here he was left by God, to show what was in his heart—to be a beacon and an awful warning to the church till the Lord shall come. But in this retrospect he ascribes his preservation to the Lord: "Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong." "I now see how it happened. I was tempted to say within myself, 'I shall never be moved;'" but now I see it was Thy favour that kept me up. But how did I learn this? "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." This shows how sensitive he was as regards his communion with God; and this is the great source of blessing and security to ourselves. My dear Christian friends, a sensitiveness in relation to communion with God in the light of His countenance, and a sensitiveness in reference to the turning away of God's countenance so that it is hidden from us—this is our great daily security. Some are quite insensible to this. Indeed, all unconverted persons are so; but even unconverted persons may learn what it is to be sensitive to this, by considering how sensitive they are in reference to other things. How sensitive you all are to the countenances of your friends at home! How sensitive a kind, affectionate child is to the countenance of his or her father! Suppose, that instead of that welcome smile to which the children have been accustomed, and in the light of which all their domestic enjoyments are doubled, a frown comes over the paternal countenance; at once all their joys are poisoned, all their peace is invaded; something has happened to displease their father, and, in proportion to the tenderness of their affection, and their sensibility in relation to his smile, is the loss of happiness which they experience. How sensitive men of the world are to the movements of business, its prosperity or adversity! If when the post brings them their letters, circumstances are revealed which have an adverse bearing upon some pending transaction from which they expected profit, and they discern that which threatens that the winding up will be to them a loss, at once they feel this keenly; they are sensitive to the fact that the gain is hiding its face from them. And why are they sensitive? Because they are alive to the gain, just as the affectionate child is alive to the countenance of his father. And why do the people of the world care nothing about the hiding of God's countenance? Because they are dead to the world. This illustration, then, conveys the idea sufficiently for our purpose. It is a blessed thing to be sensitive to the hidings or shinings of God's favour upon you. Now, David was thus sensitive. Whatever faults he may have had, he was a spiritual man, and he was sensitive to the Divine hidings; and when the Lord hid His face from him, when He made as if He did not hear him, when He allowed him to pray in vain, the dear child could not endure it, the loving son could not bear that his father's countenance should be turned from him. "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication." Yes, he could not be satisfied to go away, with his prayer unanswered; he could not retire in sullenness. There are indeed, amongst the children of men, those who would resent their father's anger, and retire in sullenness from his frown, feeling themselves injured by,

instead of feeling that they have wounded, their parent. But with the children of God the case is different; they are not undutiful children; they are not rebellious children; they do not turn against their Father, and go away from Him in sullenness, regardless of His frown. No; their hearts are moved; they are gentle, kind, affectionate children; they trust in their Father's love; they know that there is no injustice in Him, no caprice; they know that His treatment of them is in kindness, and therefore they cry to Him to return and love them again. They cannot be happy until their Father smiles. "Hear," says the psalmist, "O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper." "In vain shall I go anywhere else." The children of men may, under the circumstances which I have been describing, turn away and leave their Father's house, and, for a time, find enjoyment in other things, like the prodigal. But the children of God cannot do so; everything is under a cloud while their Father frowns. "Be Thou my helper." Vain is the help of man; vain every attempt I make to hide myself from Thee; vain all my efforts to turn my attention to other things. It will not do; I cannot be happy in anything while there is this outstanding account between me and Thee; hear, O Lord;" "Lord, be Thou my helper." My dear Christian friends, study this example; and if you find that it does indeed accord with your heart's experience, give God thanks, and persevere. Cry to Him earnestly, assured that you will prevail. He has allowed you to cry, perhaps, for some time, not because He will not hear, but because He will make you feel what a bitter thing it is to depart from Him, and make you more careful not to do so again.

In the ninth verse we find these words, which form a part of the psalmist's pleading with God: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth?" He then says, "Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper." There is, I think, no reference here to the state of disembodied spirits; the psalmist is merely speaking of the state of the church on earth; and he pleads with the Lord by asking, in effect, 'What benefit shall it be if I depart under this cloud? If I die in this condition, I can never praise Thee here again. The church will lose all my praises and rejoicings in Thy name. "Shall the dust praise Thee?"' I repeat, that I think this is a simple reference to the state of things here on earth, without involving any allusion whatever to the state of the dead. It is not that there is no praise arising from disembodied spirits to the Lord. David knew very well, that disembodied spirits, when "absent from the body," are "present with the Lord." He said as much when the child died: "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." But the psalmist merely refers to the state of things on earth. Here he could praise God; 'But,' says he, 'when I lie down in the dust, in silence, I can praise Thee no more. Oh! let it not be so! Prolong my life, that I may glorify Thy name.' This is the ground of thanksgiving at the close of the psalm. His prayer was heard; he was conscious of the difference; he was sensitive to the smiles as well as the hidings of God's face; and when a change occurred in the experience of his heart, he recorded the same by exclaiming, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing"—given me "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

What a delightful change was this! Who amongst the Lord's dear children has not experienced something of this kind? Oh! what blessedness, when some hardening sin, which has separated the child of God for a time from the enjoyment of his heavenly Father, is subdued and put away; when the stubborn spirit which has for a time cleaved to the forbidden thing and would

not let it go, has come to regard it as a mischief separating it from God, and at last surrendered the evil ; and when prayer, instead of being an insulting form, which prayer always is when it is not sincere, becomes again the real outpouring of the heart ! The Christian sometimes becomes like a piece of rusted iron. It is hard, and rough, and useless in its present state ; no filing will take the rust off. What is to be done ? It must be put in the fire ; and, after being heated, it must be beaten : the fire and the sledge hammer alone can bring it again to a polish. When the rusted iron is again put in the fire, and when it is fused and beaten, it takes a fresh polish—it is softened and subdued. So, also, is the Christian sometimes subdued. The rust is taken off ; the hardness within gives way ; God's furnace and God's hammer restore the malleable tenderness of the heart ; the stubborn one weeps again, and the prodigal cries, "I am not worthy to be called Thy son." Then comes the welcome of the Father : "My son was lost, and is found ; he was dead, and is alive again. Bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, and let us rejoice."

The psalmist concludes thus : "To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever." By his "glory" he means his tongue, which is man's glory above all creatures upon the earth ; and he desired therewith to praise the Lord his God. "Awake up, my glory," he says, "awake, lute and harp ; I myself will awake right early." And here he gives thanks for deliverance on this very account, that he might, through that deliverance, give praise and honour and thanks unto the Lord all the days of his life.

Now what a blessed retrospect was this of David's at the dedication of his house ! He was full of thanksgiving at the remembrance of God's mercy, at the remembrance of his own weakness, at the remembrance of God's chastening, which was for a little while, at the remembrance of God's deliverance, and the opening of his lips again that he might sing such praises for ever. Enter into these things, my dear friends. If any of you have come here with "the garment of heaviness," the spirit of mourning—especially if any of you have come in such a state of mind through some forgetfulness, some want of sensitiveness to the Lord's dealings, some headstrong determination to take your own course in defiance of the gentle intimations of His providence, some hardened determination to persevere although you feel the frowardness of your conduct—oh ! that you may be subdued by God ! Do not persevere until He strike you hard ; yield at once ; yield and be happy. Resistance is vain. The question is not, who shall conquer ; but, with what degree of ease to yourselves the conquest is to be gained by Him. Conquer He will. It may be gently, if you yield to His tender touch ; it will be awfully, if you persevere ; for "by terrible things in righteousness" He saves the stubborn saint ; while by gentle things, "as with the cords of a man," He saves the tender children who yield to the first impressions. "Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered ?" Yield and be happy ; believe and be saved ; acquiesce and be quieted. Know that God will be exalted—God "will be exalted in the earth."

STRENGTH OUT OF WEAKNESS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. C. F. CHILDE, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ISLINGTON,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JAN. 7, 1849.

"When I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Corinthians xii. 10.

THE Christian life abounds in paradoxes, or, to use a simpler term, in apparent contradictions. Perpetually do we find the apostles describing their experience in such terms as these :—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; perplexed, yet not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed." In another place—"Dying, and behold we live ; sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing ; poor, yet making many rich ; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." To the mere worldling all this is perfect rhapsody ; he finds it in the Bible, to be sure, and so long as it is confined to the sacred page, to the mere letter of the Word, he will accede to its truth, and set it down as some inspired parable, or oriental imagery, or imaginative history ; but let some simple-minded child of God adopt the language of the sentiment as his own, and by-and-by he is assailed with the charge of "cant" or "enthusiasm."

And yet the truth is, that whilst the natural man understands not such declarations, every believer realises them. The experience recorded in the text is not peculiar to this or that special vessel, but common to all ; nor can anything be more intelligible to the understanding of the simplest "wayfaring man" who has been taught in the school of Christ, than the statement, "when I am weak, then am I strong."

A consideration of the circumstances out of which the remark arises, may tend to explain its meaning. The Corinthians, to whom this epistle was addressed, had been greatly "corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." The apostle was that friend of the Bridegroom, who had espoused this church to her one Divine Husband ; but false apostles had crept in, and were lording themselves over them with the utmost tyranny. This moved the godly jealousy of their spiritual father, to vindicate that policy which it was the object of these men to dispute, and which the characteristic pride of the people prompted them to depreciate. In the course of this inimitable apology, comprised in the tenth and three following chapters, St. Paul finds himself reduced to the painful necessity of self-commendation. As he says—"I am become a fool in glorying ; ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." After urging other grounds of comparison he says—"I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord," and then recounts a most remark-

able one with which he was favoured. Nothing can be more unaffected or retired than the manner in which this miraculous distinction is mentioned. The history in substance was this. A vision had been vouchsafed to him, in which (as he expresses it) he had been "caught up into the third heaven," the paradise of God, and had there had a glimpse of the glory, and caught a sight of the mansions, which were to be his when he had "fought his fight, and kept the faith, and finished his course." The glories of that revelation were unutterable—more glorious, probably, and more explicit, than any which had been vouchsafed to the sons of men. We look at the favoured subject of it, and are prompted to say—"Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou shouldest thus delight to honour him?"

But, brethren, how humbling is the sequel of the history! In all the pages of inspiration, emphatic as they all are and distinct on the subject, I know of none which unfolds a more abasing view of the corruption of our fallen nature, than the one in which this incident is recorded. It teaches us that it is the same under all circumstances. Put it into what shape you will, subject it to what process you may—nay, translate it for a season to the very heaven of heavens—it will still retain its degenerate essence. Here was an apostle, miraculously called, supernaturally endowed, preeminently inspired, and at length rapt up into the presence of God, yet bearing still "the image of the earthly," and requiring a strong antidote to the most powerless of all temptations.

The remedy was as painful as it was necessary; but it was mercifully granted. "A thorn in the flesh," as he styles it, "was given to him;" probably some bodily infirmity, which disfigured his person or impeded his utterance, and so seemed to obstruct him in the work which was the very end for which he lived. That this affliction (for such it was to flesh and blood,) might depart from him, he went at once to the throne of grace, and besought the Lord thrice to remove it. The sense of weakness was distressing to him; and thinking, no doubt, that it would be as much for the interest of his Master's work as for his own comfort, were he to be freed from it, he sought immediately Him who heareth prayer. And did he seek in vain? Did ever any who asked aright? Like his incarnate Lord, he was "heard in that he feared;" yet, like Him, he was not delivered from the temptation itself, but supported under it. His actual petition which he asked of God was not granted, but the Lord did more for him than he knew how to ask for; his infirmity remained, but "grace sufficient" (the Redeemer's grace) was offered and promised to him; the "thorn" still buffeted his flesh, but "the power of Christ" rested upon his spirit; he continued "weak" as ever—the Saviour's "strength," the omnipotence of Christ, was "made perfect in his weakness," and caused him no more to remember with anguish, but contrariwise, to take pleasure in "bonds, and afflictions, and persecutions, and distresses," for Christ's sake. "For when I am weak"—such is his after estimate of his dispensation and its results—"then am I strong."

This, then, my brethren, is the connection of the text with the context; and the simple, but important and encouraging idea which it presents to us is this: the apostle was sorely buffeted; his weakness drove him to Christ, in earnest, persevering prayer, and as a necessary consequence, a sufficiency of grace was vouchsafed.

My brethren, these things are for ensamples to us, and may lead us, in applying the words of the text to our circumstances, to notice, first, the

believer's weakness, and then, the way in which this weakness becomes his strength.

I. The believer's weakness.

Was the apostle weak? Did he know what the buffetings of Satan were? Was he exposed to temptations, and ground down by infirmity? And which of the Lord's people, who has made any advance in the spiritual course, has not had to confess the same thing? Face does not answer to face more completely, when reflected in the glassy wave, than does the experience of every disciple to that of the apostle, in this respect. "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" will be the involuntary and feeling language of each. The disciple has multiplied duties to perform: it is required that he should be "filled with all the fruits of righteousness"—that he should "abound in every good work;" but he is "weak"—he has neither the power to will nor to do good. A law hath been revealed to him, which is "holy, just, and good," and which in itself might have given life; but that law is spiritual—he is "carnal, sold under sin," and it therefore becomes weak, through the infirmity of his flesh. A race is set before him; he starts fairly and runs well for a season, but he is soon "let and hindered."

How affecting, yet how perpetually recurring, is this exhibition of human weakness! Look at the young; what can be more lovely—what more promising than the first fruits of youthful piety? We admire, and feel, that

"A flower when offered in the bud
Is no mean sacrifice."

Recal to your memories, my dear young friends, the season of your confirmation—that most solemn, tender, and important era in the young Christian's life. It was, indeed, at the moment a season of promise; bright indeed were the anticipations, and sincere, I doubt not, most sincere, the resolutions of the majority of the candidates. How keen was their perception of past ungodliness! how earnest the desires for future holiness! how warm their professions of love for Christ! I call on them to review the past. An interval, it is true, has elapsed, but not of centuries, of ages, of years; a few brief months only have sufficed to prove, that those vows were, many of them, written on the sand, and that the first ripples of temptation were sufficient to obliterate their traces. Where are "the pomps and vanities renounced?" Are we to read them in the gay attire, in the light behaviour—in the conceited air, which is too often apparent in the very sanctuary in which these vows were sealed? The retrospect is too painful to be pursued. One word of affectionate expostulation and of decided reproof I feel constrained to administer to those persons who have entered this house of God, not to pray and worship God, but to insult Him by light and unseemly behaviour, by distracting as far as they can the attention of others. If such conduct be pursued, I shall be obliged to indicate the individuals to the entire congregation, and expose them, that others may fear to do the like. But I would entreat of them to remember, that the eye of God is upon them—that they may be here for the last time—that their summons may soon come, and they are very, very unfit to meet it. Lord, have mercy on them, "for they know not what they do." Of the many young persons who assembled to the immediate table of the Lord, there to surrender themselves by profession to Him, how few have since revisited it, with frequent and willing feet, on each returning sacramental opportunity!

Bitter indeed is the emphasis with which we are constrained to ask—"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" And yet, my beloved brethren, I have given many of you credit for sincerity in that act of your surrender. It was a season of unusual interest; you felt it. It was a season of individual appeal, of tender invitation. Your judgment, I know, was convinced; your feelings were moved; but your heart was unchanged. You were "weak."

Nor is the infirmity peculiar to one age, or one class; man is weak—radically, morally, spiritually weak; he is only flesh and blood, whereas his enemies are "principalities and powers," "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "spiritual wickedness in high places." His heart is "deceitful above all things;" he is "tied and bound with the chain of his sins;" his prison fetters are firmly barred, "his feet are fast in the stocks." And yet, strange infatuation! he does not sigh after true liberty. Such are his ordinary infirmities, and heavy enough they are.

But, brethren, his weakest point yet remains unmanifested. It is simply this—his forgetfulness of that weakness. The true disciple, indeed, is convinced of it, will acknowledge it, will occasionally act upon it; and yet even then perversely. Propose to him, for instance, any "work or labour of love," any sphere of usefulness to occupy, any active service in the cause of God, and he will shrink from it with the most retiring diffidence and the utmost seeming humility. 'He is sure he will be of no use whatever;' 'you could not have chosen a feebler instrument,' and so on. All this sounds very plausible, but mark that same disciple when pursuing his own calling. Observe his demeanour; listen to his conversation; notice his remarks on the inconsistencies, real, or imaginary, of others; and then discover, if you can, the indication of a prevailing sense of personal helplessness. Ah! brethren, we are all of us prone to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. We look at redeeming features in our character, just as though the leper should pride himself in the height of his stature, or on the shapeliness of his ulcerous limbs. Well may this be called "the pride of life," seeing that it is commensurate with life itself; and especially with regard to this, as well as any other infirmity, may the believer take up the words of the text and say—"I am weak;" full of infirmities which may well cast him down to the dust, and yet in danger of being "exalted above measure;" but a sense of perpetual backslidings and shortcomings will at length force on him the apostle's sentiment—"When I am weak, then am I strong."

II. Now what is the remedy for this infirmity? and how is it, that, according to the representation of our text, our weakness becomes our strength? This was the second point proposed for our consideration; and the answer to the inquiry is simply this—our weakness becomes our strength when it is so realised as to drive us to Christ for strength.

I have said that every child of God who is sensible of his weakness will readily admit it and feelingly lament it. It is written in the Word of truth, it is insisted on by every instructive feature of the Gospel, we read it in religious books; but how seldom is it actually acted upon! How prone we all are to "have confidence in the flesh!" Life itself is quite long enough for us to learn the lesson, that if we would "be strong," it must be "in the Lord and in the power of His might"—"strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." Hence,

my brethren, the cause of so many downfalls; hence so many blots, which stain the annals of history. How often do we ourselves find, that where we had the greatest confidence, where we seemed to have the surest foundation, where we thought ourselves most secure, enemies whom we accounted light in themselves have thrown us down! Yes, my brethren, to be sensible of our utter and entire weakness is the way to be strong. None will trust God, but those who cannot trust themselves; none will lean on Christ till they feel themselves sinking without Him.

Consider some of the advantages of being convinced of our weakness.

First, it will teach us to be on our watch-tower. So long as we think we have strength, we not only fall into sin, but wilfully run into danger. Thus we enter into doubtful society, read books of a doubtful tendency, partake in amusements of a doubtful character, confident in the strength of our principles and the stability of our faith. Our feeling in such cases, did we give expression to it, is this: 'Were I younger in years or in grace, were my judgment as weak as that of some, or my views less clear and confirmed, I might incur some risk from these slight deviations from the narrow path; but I have gone through so many trials, and have acquired such experience, and have maintained so long an intercourse with men, that it is not a trifle which will shake me from my foundation.' Ah! my brethren, which of us has not smarted for such presumption? Which of us cannot point (as it were) to some warning beacon in the voyage of life, and say, 'There was the sunken rock on which I struck, and but for God's infinite mercy and grace should have made shipwreck of my soul?' The man who leans on a reed for support, or builds on sand for a foundation, is wise in comparison; for "he who trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Whose voice was that, so loud and confident, so earnest in protestation—his brow crimsoned with ill-suppressed indignation, that he should be suspected of ingratitude and desertion? It was Peter's, the favoured apostle of Christ. "Though all men be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended;" and again, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." Peter was strong, but it was in himself. The consequence was, he slept when he should have watched and prayed against temptation. A temptation came; and now mark this "mighty man of valour." Can it be the same voice—the same individual? Blasphemer! perjurer! coward! "I know not the Man." To us, at least, his speech never had "betrayed" him. Yes, it was Peter's voice; and he was as full of love to his Master as ever, but it was needful he should be taught, that though his Master had surnamed him "a Rock," yet in himself he was still a reed. The breath of a woman overthrew his constancy.

It is, my brethren, by painful lessons such as this that the believer is weaned from his self-confidence, and taught to be vigilant and sober. He thus learns to discover danger in every sin, to discern the footsteps of the prowling lion in every temptation. He is safe only, when he continues resting on Christ. You may be very sure that self-confidence proceeds from a want of self-knowledge. He who says, "My mountain standeth fast," so fast that "it cannot be moved," will be the first to fall; he will be off his guard, and the enemy will take the city by surprise.

But after all, our own vigilance will be ineffectual of itself; nay, it may be the occasion of our fall. We may trust in it—we may fancy we are strong, and as the natural effect of such confidence may have our weakness exposed. "Ex-

cept the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." We must therefore pray for His continual guardianship and protection. A sense of our infirmity will lead us to do this. "Lord, save, or I perish," is the cry of realised helplessness; and the accents of misery are sure to reach the ear of mercy. On the other hand, the reason why there is not more prayer among us, (I speak now of earnest private prayer,) is because there is so much of self-sufficiency. Men think that they are "rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," and therefore they ask for nothing. A Dives will always be ashamed to beg; but when the Spirit of God opens our eyes, and shows us that we are indeed "poor and miserable and blind and naked,"—when we feel all this, we cannot refrain from praying—"Lord, hold Thou me up;" "guide me with Thy counsel;" "uphold me with Thy Spirit;" "lead me in a plain path." Such will be the language, not only of the awakened sinner, but of the experienced believer. My brethren, this is the law which God has ordained for us: we are to look to Him for daily bread—we are to cry to Him for daily grace. Our eye should be always directed towards Him. The more we feel our poverty, the more we crave—the more we crave, the more we receive—the more we receive, the more eagerly shall we turn again with new desires, as the infant to the breast.

Above all, a realised sense of helplessness will constrain us to lean more simply on Jesus. Without this, a man may keep a guard upon himself and multiply his prayers without end, and all will be unavailing—nay, only tend to foster his self-righteousness, and therefore only aggravate his weakness. It is this which explains the paradox of the text. Weakness can never produce strength, but impotence, laying hold on Omnipotence, does derive strength. "I can do all things," the apostle says. Who is he that dare give utterance to so bold a word? Surely, none of the "principalities and powers in heavenly places;" it is not for angel or archangel to say, "I can do all things." No; yet this is the proud prerogative of him who elsewhere styles himself "the chief of sinners," "one born out of due time," "insufficient of himself to think anything as of himself." Whence, then, this change of tone—from self-abasement and self-annihilation to confidence and assurance? "I can do all things." The Almighty himself could not say more; yet a worm of the earth, one accounted as "the filth and the offscouring of all things," ventures on the assertion. Nor is it an unwarranted and presumptuous word: the ground, the source, the foundation of the confidence is explained in the clause immediately following: "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me." Here is the secret of the believer's power. The disciple apprehends Christ by faith; Christ is Almighty, and thus united with Christ it is the believer's high prerogative to derive unlimited strength. Having hold on Christ, he may walk on the tempestuous wave; touching but the hem of Christ's garment, he may be cleansed from his soul's leprosy; in the name of the Lord of hosts, the Captain of his salvation, he may encounter each spiritual Goliath, and come off "more than conqueror." The enemies opposed to him are numerous and mighty. "The last enemy is death." Oh! what an enemy is death to the sinner out of Christ! How does the idea of the possibility of its near approach blanch the cheek of confidence, and humble the tone of presumption! But listen again to the apostle's triumphant challenge—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It is the believer's challenge, my brethren; and it is not made unwittingly or

hastily ; on the contrary, he deliberately ponders all the terrors of the enemy, and says—"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ;" yet in defiance of them all he can raise the song of confidence—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yes, this is the believer's challenge. It may be yours. The poorest, vilest, weakest of you all may adopt it as your own. The simple secret is, seek to be emptied of self, and "filled out of the fulness of Christ." Become fools, that you may become wise. Come, as guilty, to be pardoned ; as ignorant, to be taught ; as corrupt, to be renewed ; as weak, to be made strong. Do you feel your vileness ? Has God, by the grace of his Holy Spirit, brought home conviction to your consciences ? Do you mourn over your insensibility ? Is the burden of your sins "intolerable ?" This is your best plea. Remember yet again, misery is the best recommendation to mercy ; the patient's disease is his best introduction to the physician ; the infant's cry is the best conqueror of his mother's help and love. Come, then, this night, "weary and heavy laden," that you may find pardon and "rest : " ye repentant ! that your forgiveness may be received ; ye backsliders ! that your backslidings may be healed : come, with your hard hearts, that they may be made tender—with your sinful hearts, that they may be washed : come to Jesus, who says, "My grace is sufficient for you ;" and it shall be yours to say with the apostle—"When I am weak, then am I strong."

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE FISK, LL.B.

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHAPEL, MAIDA HILL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 21, 1849.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."—James iii. 2.

SOMETIME since, my dear brethren, I announced my intention, to preach a series of sermons, to be resumed from time to time as occasion might permit, on the important subject of Christian morals ; thereby to put you in mind of the practical part of religion, while endeavouring to unfold the great doctrines, upon the knowledge and belief of which the salvation of the souls of men depend. The practice of true Christian morality is the offspring of a renewed and sanctified heart ; its end and object is the glory of God. There is a spurious morality current in the world, which is at best but a keeping up of appearances, whilst the heart is estranged from God ; its primal object centres in self, and not in God. And it must ever be so, until the heart has yielded to the love of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus to the guilty and the lost. Sandy, indeed, is the foundation of all morals that are not based upon the everlasting and unchangeable principles of the Gospel ; the superstructure cannot stand ; the best morals that are destitute of that foundation, however fenced about by resolutions solemnly made, are powerless in the hour of strong temptation ; they are but the whitening of the sepulchres, which are filled with all manner of corruption. And yet such is the morality, we fear, of by far the greater part of mankind ; and it is suffered to occupy the place of vital religion in the soul.

I have already, in this series, addressed you on the government of the thoughts and desires of the human heart ; you will gather from the words of my text, that I purpose now to speak of the government of the tongue ; and though the apostle, in the chapter from which the text is taken, declares that "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity," that it "defleth the whole body," and "setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell"—and though he adds, "but the tongue can no man tame ; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison ;"—yet I do not despair of showing you how the tongue may be governed, when I shall, in the first place, have impressed you with a due sense of the great importance of governing it.

I. If it be "out of the abundance of the heart" that "the mouth speaketh," then the utterance of the tongue is one of the surest indications of the actual state of the heart. Falschhood, evasion, artifice, dissimulation, may for

a time conceal the state of the heart, but when unmasked, they declare it as surely as the most genuine expressions of sincerity can. I dwell not upon those awful perversions of the gift of speech to the purposes of blasphemy and obscenity, which are, alas ! too common in this guilty world, but shall invite myself to the notice of the no less sinful perversions which every vigilant observer of the attitudes of mankind cannot fail to meet at every turn of his intercourse with the world, ay, and with some professing Christians, too—perversions which are made without a blush, and tolerated without a censure.

At the very outset let me declare to you, in the words of the same apostle—“ If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain.” Thus, then, we are assured, that wherever there is an unbridled tongue there is also a deceived heart—a vain and shallow religious profession. We must look steadily at this truth ; we must not seek to evade it ; we must honestly try and test ourselves by it ; for there is a day coming, when we shall be tested by it in the face of an assembled universe and before the tribunal of the Judge of the whole earth. Just as our Lord himself declares, that even “ every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment ;” adding, as a matter of general principle—“ By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Brethren, let me affirm to you my belief, founded on much watchful observation and no small experience among mankind, that even among those who stand free from the grosser forms of sin, which begin in scandal and end in shame, a very large proportion are not free from the habitual sin of an unbridled tongue. Too many deem it but a small matter. The sinful utterance goes forth and is forgotten ; the heart is unhumbled on account of it ; pardon is not sought for it, amendment is not aimed at ; and the sinful habit, like all habits, gains strength by usage. And is God satisfied—can He be ?—with the flippant declaration, ‘ I meant no harm by what I said ?’ Did you mean to do good by what you said ? Was that your sole motive for speaking at all ? If not, then the word spoken, whatever might be its purport, was the word of an unbridled tongue, and therefore sinful, and the indication (so far) of a deceived heart. Let them who have not been accustomed to the resolute habit of bridling the tongue, fall back upon themselves at the close of any day of their lives—let them call to mind the transactions in which they have been engaged, the intercourse they have had with others, the subjects which have occupied their minds, the sentiments they have entertained, the feelings they have cherished, the motives by which they have been governed, or the want of motive which may be seen in the workings of some minds ; and what an accumulation of guilt, of soul-destroying guilt, may be found “ treasured up for wrath against the day of wrath,” if mercy and pardon be not sought and found at the foot of the cross of the Redeemer !

But let them not only inquire thus far—let them resolutely call to mind how every transaction of the day, how all intercourse with others, how every sentiment, every feeling, every motive, or want of motive, may have been accompanied with the utterance of an unbridled tongue, and let them imagine how they would feel if every word was written down and read aloud in an assembly of their fellow-creatures only as large as this which I am addressing. Could they listen to the repetition without a distressing sense of much sinful inconsistency ? On such a review, how many an unkind and ungenerous insinua-

tion can they detect ! and how, by their vague and indirect phraseology, may they have inflicted a lasting, it may be an irreparable injury, on the reputation of another ! How many an evasion—how many a qualification of truth, till it becomes error—has dropped from the unbridled tongue of those who have not moral courage to speak truthfully at all times and in the face of all consequences ! How many a word, spoken with thoughtless levity, has sent a wound to the heart of some one, which all diligence of subsequent explanation and all the falsehood of hollow regret can never heal ! How many an indirect word of censure, yet aimed with the ingenuity of bitter and malevolent intention, has pierced a sensitive heart to the quick ! It is a keen weapon, which cannot be parried, because seldom admitting, seldom seeming to call for denial. How many ebullitions of hasty anger, provoked or not—how many utterances of peevish fretfulness (the hatred of an ungoverned heart) have been, with some, the fruits of an unbridled tongue,—carrying with them a malaria which taints and poisons the atmosphere which should be serene and heavenly ! How many hours have been spent by those who have leisure—and by some who have not, alas !—in idle, frivolous, flippant gossiping ! The vanities of their own hearts, the silliness of their own pursuits—the conduct, habits, motives, peculiarities, and transactions of others, of whom perhaps they have really known but little and cared less—have been the subjects of their intercourse with others ; out of which have grown false views, false estimates, false rumours, which may have disturbed, on being repeated in another circle, the happiness of many an individual and many a family !

Let it be asked—What did you mean by that which you said on such and such an occasion, and to such a person, who has repeated what you said with additions ? ‘Oh ! I meant nothing.’ Meant nothing ? Why, you fixed a stigma on one of the best members of society, whose heart is now bleeding in consequence ; or you have exposed to heartless ridicule one of the most excellent of the earth, who, however, pities and prays for and forgives you ; though smarting under the wounds you have inflicted. You meant nothing ? Then why did you speak ? This single act of an unbridled tongue proves, on your own showing, that you spoke either in the fulness of folly, or out of the malignant heart, which shrinks from avowing its intentions and takes refuge in falsehood. Or do you say, you did not think it would be repeated ? But it was ; it was sure to be ; it was listened to but to be repeated by some one, either as foolish or as mischievous. ‘But it was said in confidence.’ What folly ! In confidence ? Malignity in confidence ? Can such a thing be ? The mind that is capable of listening to such things is not capable of retaining them. They must be repeated—for the utterer and the repeater are of the same class—perverse children, with an unbridled tongue.

My brethren, I pursue these examples no further. My mind sickens on a review of the multiform modes in which the unbridled tongue manifests the simple tendencies of the natural heart of man ; and certain it is, that very much of that want of harmony which characterises civilised communities—that want of confidence, that prevalence of suspicion between man and man, is the product of the unchecked license of the tongue. But even if there were no positive harm resulting, the absence of all good should be enough to make us steadily aim at having the tongue brought absolutely into subjection. It is confessedly a difficult matter ; the text implies it—experience proves it : and the apostle expressly declares, that “no man can tame the tongue ;” by

which he means, that no man, by the mere force of his own resolution, can accomplish it—that no man can do it by the force of his moral influence upon others. Individual effort and resolution on our own part, and the moral influences of others acting upon us, may go so far as to modify, in many particulars, the utterance of the tongue; but not so as to “tame” it—not so as entirely to subdue and eradicate its evil tendency. The remedy must be of a higher kind, and must penetrate to the very root of the evil.

If, as we are told, it be “out of the abundance of the heart” that “the mouth speaketh,” then it is to the heart that the sole and effectual remedy must be applied. The tree must be made good before its fruits can be good. Listen to our Lord’s own words: “How can ye, being evil, bring forth good things? A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things.” Who, then, is the “good man, out of the treasure of whose heart” there shall proceed those utterances which serve to the purpose of edifying others and bringing glory to God?—and are not these the only ends for which the distinguishing faculty of speech has been bestowed by a gracious God? Brethren, the “good man,” with the treasury of a good heart, is he who has been “born again of water and of the Spirit,” who has become “by grace through faith” a “new creature in Christ Jesus.” “Marvel not, then,” when severely censuring, as we do this day, the sinful license of the tongue, and urging its being bridled into subjection, “marvel not” that we declare without qualification, “Ye must be born again.” Till that has become the experience of those who “name the name of Christ,” the unruly tongue will assert its liberty, and like the index-hands upon the dial-plate, will indicate the true character and tendency of the mechanism within.

He, then, who is born again and has a new and spiritual nature acting and expanding within him, is the “perfect man” to whom the apostle refers in the text; as being not only inoffensive in the utterances of his tongue, but “able also to bridle” and keep in subjection “his whole body.” He is called a “perfect man,” not indeed in an absolute sense, but in his relation to God in Christ. He has entered upon a definite state, which is elsewhere called being “complete in Christ.” As “a new creature” he is invested with new powers of self-government, and with new motives to call out those powers in the way of steady and unremitting application. He has, moreover, new ends before him, in all that he thinks and speaks, as well as in all that he intends and designs to do. God’s glory and the highest good of his fellow-creatures are those ends. His power over the tongue may not be perfect, or perfectly exercised, at the first, but it progresses and gains strength; his controul of his whole body, or being, is not at the first absolute, but it extends. His heart is like the shepherd son of Jesse, that goes forth with his sling and his stone against the Goliath of sin—not in his own strength, but in the strength of the living God, and victory rejoices in the progress of his prowess.

II. And what are the means which the new, or “perfect man” uses, in order that he may not offend in word?

1. First he lives in an atmosphere of prayer, and in watchfulness against every outward influence that might surprise him into the inconsistency of speaking hastily or unadvisedly with his tongue. He keeps steadily aloof from those who habitually indulge in the sin of an unbridled tongue, unless it

be perchance to reprove and admonish them. He will suffer no such sins to be committed in his presence, any more than he would suffer theft, or murder, or any other violation of the command of God to be committed, because he knows that the sins of the tongue equal any of them in guilt, in the sight of a holy God. But he seeks to have his motives always holy—single, pure and free from taint in all his intercourse with others. Self-restraint will be ever at work and always needful. He acquires the habit of considering before he utters anything; he weighs well the probable effect of all that he may utter, assured that if it work not for good it must for evil. Even a heathen philosopher, with only the light of nature to guide him, was wont to admonish his disciples on this subject, saying, “Either be silent or say something that is better than silence.” But a greater than Pythagoras has said—“In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lip is wise.” “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his speech? There is more hope of a fool than of him.”

2. If the habit of consideration be needful at all times, it is especially needful when we are conscious of any excitement of our inward feelings, occasioned by outward circumstances beyond our controul. And how important is the exhortation of the apostle James—“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God!” The “perfect man” must live in the world, though he be not of the world; for the temptations and incitements to the unbridled use of the tongue beset him as commonly as they do the people of the world. But against these he is ever seeking to be guarded; and the motives by which he aims at being always governed are called into action when the danger presses; or if, in an unguarded moment, the tongue outstrips his habit of considerateness, he brings the sin, with all its sinfulness, to the atoning blood of his Redeemer, and rests not till he realises the tranquillising sweetness of pardon.

3. But, thirdly, the “perfect man,” the true child of God, is studiously careful for the welfare, while he respects the very feelings of others; and on this account he bridles his tongue, so that he may not, by even an inconsiderate word, injure the one, or wound the other. He knows that the impression made by a single sentence, sometimes by a word, even by a tone of voice, is not like a ripple on the face of the waters, occasioned by a passing breeze, but often like an engraving on brass with a point of steel; he knows that words once spoken cannot be gathered up again—or if they can, they may be like poisoned arrows, which upon being withdrawn, leave the virus in the flesh, into which they have penetrated; and he carries with him the assurance, that in his case the sins of the tongue would be marked in the book of God’s remembrance, as sins of a deeper die, because through grace he is armed with power over the tongue, and is able, if he will resolutely use the power, to bridle that, and his whole body besides. He will ever be ready to speak to the edification of others, in things which belong to their and his everlasting peace. Yet he will be judicious both with regard to the occasions of speaking, and the mode and tone with which he speaks. He knows that garrulity, even upon the things of God, may expose truth itself to contempt, if not to ridicule; he is aware that religious talkativeness may soon become irreligious formality, by which his own soul, and the souls of others, may suffer. The mere religious professor as commonly sins in this way as in others which I

have already glanced at, and imagines that no harm is done, nay, rather, perhaps, imagines that he is heightening the already favourable opinion which the world has formed of him and of his hollow profession, which in their judgment passes for genuine.

4. But there is another respect in which the true Christian, aiming at real consistency, is perpetually watchful. Having become aware of those subjects which most occasioned the sinful utterance of his tongue, before he received from God the power of bridling it, he now resolutely abstains altogether from these subjects. If they recur to his mind, he represses them; if unexpectedly he be drawn into them by others, and if at any time he feels tempted to speak in a way that becomes him not of others, he perhaps calls to mind what has been very wisely and truly said—"Weak and foolish minds chatter about persons; strong and wise minds converse about things." And then will come to his aid some holy admonition from the Word of God; or he will call to mind the words of David—"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, when the wicked is before me." Hence he will take heed, that when provoked by the perversity of others, or when wounded by their unbridled tongue, no unchristian bitterness of retort shall escape his lips. He will acquire the habit of "enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself," after the example of his Divine Master. "In patience" he will "possess his soul," even when his enemies may be at the gate; and knowing that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," he will give such an answer, if answer at all be needed, or if not, will manifest his patience in silence. At all events, he will prayerfully endeavour to act in accordance with the precept of the apostle—"Let your conversation be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." The people of the world would say—"Show a proper spirit under the provocation of others—tell them your whole mind—make them feel your indignation and sense of injury;" the child of God says—"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Upon the high principle involved in this brief sentence he endeavours steadily to act; and what advantage he thus gains over those who would disturb his peace!

5. Lastly. Guided, taught, sanctified, and upheld by the Holy Spirit, the consistent Christian, who in the text is called the "perfect man," cultivates a habit of prayerful self-examination, not only that he may ascertain what progress he is making in the Divine life, but that he may daily come to the "Fountain opened for sin," on every occasion of detected departure from that habitual self-government which distinguishes him from other men—from those who know not God, and seek not to live, and think, and speak, and act for His glory. He will not seek to extenuate the sin of any such departure—he will not be the apologist for any heedless word he may have spoken, and if he has in the remotest degree been the cause of injury or wounding to others, he will have no rest till he has done his utmost with all sincerity to repair the injury; the effect of all which will be, increased diligence in habits of consideration, a humbler sense of the corruption of his fallen nature, and a more childlike dependence upon that sovereign grace, by the aid of which alone he can hope to walk consistently among men, and in the eye of a heart-searching God.

Such, then, are some of the means to which the "perfect man" will resort; and there are others, of no less importance, which we have not time to

mention. Let these, however, be used heartily by all of us, who think that we really belong to Christ, and a change for the better will soon be felt within ourselves, and observed by others. Dear brethren, lay this important practical subject well to heart. Sit in stern judgment upon yourselves; and if conscience bear its testimony against any, oh! slumber not in a vain profession of religion, while the swift witness of the tongue may be against you, marking you out for condemnation among men, and arraigning you for judgment before the bar of the eternal God.

THE "CLOUD OF WITNESSES."

WE would remark on the term "witnesses," that possibly we somewhat overstrain its import when we imagine those who had departed in the faith looking down from their resting-places, spectators of the combat which we carry on with evil. It is an idea which we are all prone to entertain, but one whose justice it might be hard to demonstrate, that the dead are not wholly withdrawn from intercourse with the present scene of being; but that though we upon earth can hold no communings with disembodied spirits, our actions lie open to the scrutiny of those who have thrown off this framework of flesh. There is something which we may not suspect commends itself to the romance of our nature in the supposition, that dead kinsmen and friends take an interest in what we do and in what we endure, and that with much of the attributes of guardian spirits they tend our pathway, and watch solicitously our every action. There is something which partially does away with the bitterness of separation, when we imagine it confined to ourselves, and not extended to those whom we love and lament; and it seems almost to rifle the grave, and strip death of its power, when we imagine fastened on ourselves the eyes of the departed ones who most enjoyed our affection, and feel that, however broken the ties of companionship, we still move and still act in their presence. Yet the complacency we may feel in the entertainment of the opinion is not to be received as a proof of its existence; and if we remember how sorrow preponderates over joy in human allotments, and how, in the conduct even of the holiest amongst us, corrupt principle manifests itself as still fearfully powerful, we shall find cause to think, it could not consist with the happiness of separate spirits that they should be, as we suppose them, acquainted with transactions of which this earth is the theatre, and admitted to the inspection of our toil and our warfare. It might add to the bliss of a parent delivered from the flesh, and received into the blessedness of heaven, to be allowed to behold his orphan child pressing on bravely in the pathway of godliness; but if this child forsake the law of his Maker, and walk in the broad road to destruction, it surpasses our power to conceive that the parent could look on from his own state of felicity and feel no disquietude, though he dwell where sorrow cannot enter; the supposition is impossible that he should know grief or anxiety. Thus the ascribing to them the power of witnessing, according to the common acceptation of the term, what is done and suffered on earth, would involve us in a labyrinth of ideas. If we suppose them acquainted with one part, we cannot suppose them kept ignorant of another part of the actions and circumstances of their bereaved households. If they looked upon the righteous child, and not upon the unrighteous, the very division would seem to tell them the fact, which so far as we can judge, must interfere with their happiness.

It is indeed true—and perhaps no truth more overpasses our present comprehension—that the eternal blessedness of the saints is independent of re-union with kinsfolk or children. It is an overwhelming thought, but, nevertheless, one which we dare not put from us as unfounded, that many a parent shall be unspeakably and everlastingly happy, and yet know that his child is lost. In our present state we naturally imagine that the absence of a beloved one would cause a blank in the circle, and that the certainty of his misery would mar all our enjoyments; yet nothing is more evident, that the imagination must be incorrect. The case will undoubtedly occur of parents who miss

their children, and of children who miss their parents, among the shining groups of the heirs of the first Resurrection; but since we know that there shall be no more crying, neither any more pain, we are sure that this failing to meet the object of earthly affection, shall be attended with nothing that approaches to disquietude, and that even he who stands the alone saved one of a household, has the same felicity in this his loneliness, as though girt around by the beings whom he once held most dear.

Inexplicable it may be, but easily supposed, that so shall the man admitted into the privileges of immortality be swallowed up in God, that every manifestation of the Divine attributes will add something to his happiness, and that in whatsoever the Creator is glorified, in that will the ransomed find materials of delight, and awe, and solemn adoration—ay, even though it be the destruction of an impenitent and impious multitude, and that multitude comprehend some or many of their own flesh and their own blood. We cannot be Christians, and doubt that the affections of our nature seem to recoil from the statement, that God shall so literally be "all in all" through eternity to the glorified soul—that from whatever the one receives honour, from that does the other derive happiness. Forasmuch as it lies beyond all peradventure, that the Almighty shall be glorified in the condemnation of the reprobate, as well as in the deliverance of the righteous, it must also be incontrovertible, that the saved ones shall recognize, and that with thankfulness, the displayed attributes of the Deity, in the awardments of the fire and of the worm; so that they shall not be withheld from pouring out the confession, that "the Lord is known by the judgments which He executes"—by the consciousness that in the cry of anguish which comes up from the pit, there are the moanings of those who called them parents on earth, and that the glory of their Maker is wrung from the stretched sinews and the agonized spirits of those who had once been the centre of the warmest and most powerful affections.

Now whilst we most unreservedly admit, that the final happiness of the redeemed shall in no degree be interfered with by the failure of relatives to win the like portion, we think it unfair to argue, that the spirits of the righteous may be spectators of what passes amongst the members of their bereaved households. It is quite true that God shall hereafter be glorified in the punishment of the disobedient, and that in this punishment, as manifesting the Divine justice and holiness of character, the children of the resurrection shall find a righteous satisfaction; but then it is to the fullest extent true, that God is not now glorified in the disobedience of the disobedient, but that, on the contrary, He is grievously dishonoured by their life and conversation. We cannot therefore infer, that because the redeemed shall behold without disquietude the punishment, they may also behold without disquietude the disobedience. That which in the last instance annihilates disquietude and fills the mind with complacency—namely, the ingathering of glory to the Creator—is wanting in the first instance. If you bring them in as witnesses of the things done on this theatre of probation, you must consider them as alike interested in the struggle and the success of the combatants; and you cannot, we think, reconcile with this taking of interest, a truth of which we can allow no infraction, that the deep repose of separate spirits is never disturbed, but that whether those whom they loved in the flesh yield to them, or become their antagonists, in each an unbroken tranquility shall encircle them at the day of the Resurrection.—Rev. H. MELVILL, B.D.

HEARTY CHRISTIANITY.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1849.

"Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation."—Isaiah li. 7, 8.

To our Lord Jesus Christ "bare all the prophets witness." They "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—they preached the Gospel by anticipation. Isaiah, in an especial manner, proclaimed the righteousness, the sacrifice, and the consolation of Christ. "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." He spoke these things with direct and special application to his own people the Jews, and doubtless such language had a direct and primary application to that nation. He anticipated—I now speak of the prophet—he anticipated national calamities which were to befall them long after these times. He described their captivity in Babylon, which did not take place till after his death—he expressly named their deliverer, Cyrus, king of Persia. Further, he frequently addresses them as in a depressed, forlorn, and desponding state, and encourages them by the assurance, that the Lord will yet comfort Zion, that He will yet succour Jerusalem. This language, though primarily addressed to the Jews, is not, I repeat, exclusively applicable to them. It had, indeed, a primary application to them, and there can be little doubt, that its most glorious fulfilment is reserved for that predicted day, when they shall be restored to their own city—the city of the great King. But while such language lies as a treasure hidden from the Jews at present, though ready to be used by them at the appointed period, we of the Gentiles are privileged to use it in the mean time. We are, as St. Paul expresses it, "grafted into their olive tree," to partake with them of the root and fatness of that tree. Thus without robbing them, we are enriched; without at all wresting or perverting the Scriptures, without any gratuitous assumption, we read, as applicable to ourselves now, language which was originally, and shall be eventually, applicable to that nation. It is in this indirect derived manner that all Scripture continues applicable at present. The persons to whom it was originally addressed, are all past and gone, but it remains. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Be assured, then, my brethren, that the language of these ancient writers, these inspired prophets of Jehovah, is as truly and strictly applicable to you in this country, at this day, as if Almighty God, the Ruler of heaven and earth, had spoken it, naming England by name, and, uttering the words in a whirlwind, had called upon us to apply them to ourselves. They are addressed to you, without any ingenuity or perversion on the part of the interpreter, but simply through the permanent and transferable application of the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

In the passage which I have read to you, our attention is invited to three points—first, a people described, and called upon to hearken unto God—“Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law;” secondly, an exhortation addressed to that people—“Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings;” and, thirdly, a twofold reason assigned why this exhortation should be obeyed: the one is, that “the moth shall eat them up,” and “the worm” destroy them—the other, that God’s “righteousness is for ever, and His salvation from generation to generation.”

I. Consider, first, then, the people here described, and the call addressed to them to hearken unto God. “Ye that know righteousness”—this is the first branch of the description. Man by nature does not know what righteousness is. He is satisfied if he meet the requirements of his fellow-men—if his conduct come up to the demands of public opinion, if he stand fair in society, if he avoid all that his fellows call crimes and vices; this contents him in his natural state of mind, and if required to yield more than this, he considers that a needless requirement is made, for that this is quite sufficient. If to this he add some of the graces of private life, some of the elegancies and tastefulnesses of polished and civilised society, he is abundantly satisfied with himself. Now this is a very dark and ignorant estimate of what “righteousness” is; yet it is one which satisfies the bulk of mankind, and to as many of you as are still in what the Scriptures call a natural, that is, an unconverted state of mind, it appears, at this moment, quite sufficient. If your conduct be what those among whom you live, and your neighbours around, require it to be—if you meet the standard of public opinion in that section of the public with whom you associate, so that your friends, and neighbours, and companions respect you as a well-conducted person, and if, in addition, there be occasional acts of benevolence and manifestations of kindness in domestic life, you are quite satisfied with yourselves; you feel that no more is needed, and you proceed without the slightest apprehension of danger. This is the ordinary state of mind “after the course of this world.” Now such persons do not meet the description of the text, they do not “know righteousness;” they are living, as Saul of Tarsus tells us he was, “without the law”—“I was alive,” he says, “without the law once”—not without the letter of the law, for, as a Pharisee, he had been instructed in the letter of the law from his youth, but he was “alive” in his own estimation, without any strong conviction of what the law requires, without any lively appreciation of its demands as God’s law, being satisfied with the righteousness which he had. This is precisely the condition of a large number of highly respectable members of society, on whose behalf the ministers of the Gospel are most deeply concerned. Concerning these it is, that we pray God for that penetrating grace which shall show them the difference between a godless morality and the “righteousness” of God, and make them to “know Christ.” To be made acquainted with righteousness—to

be made acquainted with the fact that God requires truth in the inward parts, that the law of God extends to the thoughts of the heart—to be made acquainted with the fact that the imaginations of the mind may be, and in all such persons habitually are, sinful—that the mode of thinking of business, of pleasure, of literature, of accomplishments, of dress, may be all one tissue of iniquity—to be made acquainted with this, to feel this, to be shaken from self-confidence, by such a feeling, is to begin to “know righteousness.” The apostle describes this by these remarkable words. After saying that he was “alive without the law once,” he says—“But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” “When the commandment came!”—why, he had heard all the commandments “from a child,” and knew them all. What, then, is the meaning of this expression? It simply means, that when the real spirituality of the commandment came into his heart, when he began to know what righteousness is, when a sense of sinfulness sprang up within him, and all his self-confidence died, then for the first time in his life, he knew himself a miserable sinner. Now you have all been calling yourselves, over and over again, this morning, “miserable sinners,” and not one of you has intended what you said at the time, except those in whom this change has been wrought; and perhaps not all even of such, for some of them may not have been attending to the words at the time when they were uttered. And this is the great danger which attends public worship. Words are prepared for use, and are habitually and respectfully employed, which express what the persons whom I now address do *not* feel, and this generates a sort of hypocrisy in worship. You call yourselves “miserable sinners” without intending any such thing, or if you have any feeling upon the subject, it is of a general character, and the moment any particulars are mentioned you shrink from the application and resent it as an affront. My dear friends, “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” You may depend upon it, that except you are led to know what righteousness is, you will never dwell with a righteous God. It is in order that you may see and feel this want, that we recur so frequently to this branch of our subject. This is the very first step from the careless state of unconverted nature into that happy region where all the blessings of the Gospel are experienced. For to be made acquainted with righteousness is to be made to feel that God “requires truth in the inward parts,” and that His law extends to the “thoughts and intents of the heart;” that without any act which man condemns, man may indeed be a miserable sinner; that without any crime committed, without any vice habitually indulged, there may be that idolatry of the world, that intense devotion to business or pleasure or even mental improvement in natural things, literary and tasteful things, things in themselves in no way disgraceful or wrong—there may be such intense idolatry to these things that God is habitually forgotten; and it is declared that “all who forget God shall be turned into hell.” Let me entreat you fairly to consider this representation of the text; fairly to look at the Bible which you profess to value, and see whether the interpretation there put upon the law of righteousness does not clearly bear out the charge now affectionately, yet plainly brought against you, that you do not “know righteousness.” You do not suppose that you have ever been guilty of murder. ‘No, no,’ you are ready to say. But hear what the Lord says: “He that is angry with his brother without a cause is a murderer.” Have you never been angry with your brother without a cause? Remember the interpretation put upon the law with respect to adultery by the great Lawgiver of righteousness. “He that looketh upon a woman to

just after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

To be acquainted with righteousness, then, is to perceive what the law of God requires in its spiritual application to the thoughts of man's heart; it is to remember that the Lawgiver is the Heart-searcher; that He speaks not of the outward actions, but of the inward play of the mind and feelings, the desires and meditations; that His authoritative voice from heaven is not the voice of an earthly legislator, which merely strikes at men's outward doings—the only parts of man's conduct of which an earthly legislator can take cognizance,—but that God, the great Legislator, the high Lawgiver, speaks to man's heart, and that the first and great commandment of His law is, that he love the Lord his God with all his heart. Alas! where is the response to this command? Do you know what righteousness is? If so, whence comes it that in your estimation of righteousness the first and great commandment of the law is forgotten? How is it, that if you meet what man requires you are satisfied, although you have never even aimed at obeying the first and highest commandment of the law of God? Bear, bear, I entreat you, this reproof. Except you be clearly reprov'd here you will never get further than this.

But when any one has got further, as the people addressed in the text had done, when a man is indeed acquainted with righteousness and knows what it is, then nothing but a perfect righteousness can give him peace. He is then completely beaten out of all self-dependence; he sees that the law of God requires what it is utterly hopeless for man to aim at,—he cannot attain unto it, it is too high for him; and if this were all that he is taught, despair would be the inevitable result. But they who learn this learn more. It is in the light of God's righteousness that God's law is truly read; it is in the light which comes from the cross that the characters of Mount Sinai are appreciated; and therefore where the bane is, there is the antidote; where the poison of condemnation is ready to enter into the soul, the balm of Gilead comes and the wounded spirit is healed. So it was with that great exemplar, Saul of Tarsus. When he knew what righteousness was, then all the things in which he had gloried were cast away as useless; all his ecclesiastical privileges, all his external morality, all his adventitious advantages arising from birth and station, and circumstances, all that had been in his estimation "gain" before, were now "counted loss for Christ, that he might win Him and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law," but "the righteousness which is of God." This righteousness it is, which is here spoken of—"Ye that know righteousness." There is a righteousness, wrought by a man, which really meets all that the law of God requires. Here is the greatest wonder ever wrought upon earth; a man "made of a woman," taking flesh and blood—a man having flesh and blood like ourselves, a man having a human spirit capable of tender and wounded feeling, a man open to all the infirmities of our fallen race, yet without any sin—I say not without crime, or without vice, but without sin, without a wandering thought, without one movement of imagination opposed to the will of God, without a rumination, from morning until night, which was not in strict accordance with the Divine mind,—a perfect response to the holy law, an answer given back from a human heart, an echo true to the demands of God. "Thou shalt love with all thy heart," said the law; "with all my heart I do love," said Jesus: and during the whole of His life He answered perfectly to all that the law required. This is the righteousness which you must know; this is the only righteousness in which you must trust. None but this can appear in God's presence, none but this can bear comparison with His holy law, none

but this can stand in the day of judgment. No righteousness of any kind that any man ever wrought can meet the judgment of God, except the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and unless you have that, you must be condemned for ever. "Ye that know righteousness."

There is another clause in the description which is inseparable from the one which I have examined. It is this: "the people in whose heart is My law." The whole law is comprehended in one word—"love." Love has two kinds of operations in this case, one towards God and one towards man; but all the commandments are comprehended in "love." This law of love is written in the heart. This is the description of the new covenant. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will write My law in their hearts." Now, my brethren, what law is it that is written in your hearts? The expression is a remarkable one. Every man's heart is set upon something; and the phrase here employed expresses the main drift, the master pursuit, the ruling passion, which seizes a man's heart and influences his life. Every one of you has something of this kind. The necessities of business, imposing personal and habitual attention upon you, for the maintenance of your family, and your position and station in society, occupy the hearts of most of you. The "law" of business is written in the heart; the law of the profession, whatever it may be, by which you hope to maintain your position, and to preserve your rank and station in society, and to provide for your household, this law is written in your heart. And in the case of persons who are not under this obligation, some amusement, some vanity or gaiety, some exhibition of dress, some entertainment, some luxury, some embellishment, is the law of the heart; while with persons of a higher class of mind it is some literary attainment, some accomplishment, some advancement in music or painting, some improvement in natural or scientific knowledge. These are the idols which are worshipped in the hearts of mankind in general. We find a few who follow these things subordinately to the grand worship of a new heart; we find many who follow one or other of these things primarily, and then it is the idol of the heart. The Christian may follow one or more of these things, but then it is subordinately—the law of God is in the heart. Now let me ask you,—and I am sure of a favourable response from some—do you find something which has more habitual possession of your heart than your business has? Do you find something more habitually possessing your heart than your pleasures, than your literature, than your enjoyments, than your embellishments, or accomplishments, or scientific advancement in education? There ought to be. I stand here as the advocate of something higher. I find no fault with these things except with regard to the place which they occupy; I stand here as the advocate of a higher righteousness, a higher law for your hearts, a higher aim for your inner man. You have teachers, for example, and I am willing to believe, accomplished teachers. Be it so. You are to learn their lessons and use them; but I put it to your own minds, to your own common sense, whether you have not at this moment a teacher of higher things,—the highest things of all, extending to the highest objects, and whether, when I claim the chief place for the law of the Lord our God, I am not right in so doing. I am not content with a parallel niche in your heart with other things for this law; I am not content that Jesus Christ should be enshrined in a similar niche with literature, or accomplishments, or pleasure; I cannot ask such a place for Him; He is Lord of all; if these things are not in subordination to His authority, they are rivals, and it is easy to know what will become of rivals against Him, for He is God. I ask the highest place in

your hearts for Him, and I ask the place of servants and menials for all these other things. The other things may be needful—I do not deny their necessity; they may be proper—I do not deny their propriety; but keep them in their places, they are all servants. You would not justify insubordination in natural things; you would not justify the upsetting of the framework of society and the placing of servants on an equality with masters in the family. Well, then, I ask for my Master and your Master, my Lord and your Lord, my Saviour and your Saviour, that He shall have your highest affections, that His service shall be the law of your heart, and that everything else shall be subordinate. This is the description here given of God's people. "His law is in their hearts." And such are called upon to hearken unto Him. "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law."

I must now assume that I address some who answer to this description; some who by the grace of God have passed from that natural state which I have described, who have experienced the power of His Spirit and had recourse to His dear Son, and who now feel that His love is shed abroad in their hearts, that the love of Christ constrains them. Such persons willingly subordinate everything to Him; they feel that to Him they owe everything, that all their business, all their pleasures, all their opportunities for secular learning, all their refined feelings and cultivated tastes, all embellishment and ornament, every thing, in short, which gives them pleasure in life, they owe to Him. They have found His supremacy and they delight in it. To such persons, then, He says, "Hearken to Me;" you have been accustomed to hear many things—hear this: there are many things enticing you, many books are published with that view—do not be led away by them; "hearken to Me;" sit down and hear what I have to say; no matter what tempting books come out and are laid on the table week after week,—hear Me in My word. "Hearken to Me." Ye "that have ears to hear," hear God. If you allow yourselves to be enticed by the variety and attractiveness of new books, and pass your time without sitting as patient disciples at the feet of Jesus, reading again the words that you have often read, and hearkening to them as if He had spoken them for the first time, the very heart and soul of your religion will die out; it cannot be maintained in any other school than His, by any other teaching than that of the Scriptures. Hearken to Him, then, my dear friends. Do not say that you know the Scriptures already. Alas! you know but little, and even the parts with which you are most familiar, if you read them hearkening in heart for the teaching of the Spirit, would appear new. Sit down to your Bibles and let the ears of your hearts be opened, and the Holy Ghost will speak to you. "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law."

I would remind you, my dear Christian friends, what true enjoyment you have experienced when you have "hearkened" to Him, when you have patiently waited at His door, when, taking up your Bible in quiet, you have shut this world out, and have read not to gratify curiosity,—for there is no new disclosure there—but to make that law which is in your heart have greater power over your life; when you have endeavoured to learn more and more of Him who has "fulfilled all righteousness," when you have hearkened sweetly to His inward teaching and waited patiently with meditation and prayer. I call Him to witness that the enjoyment which you have had at such a moment, exceeds, immeasurably exceeds, the highest extacies which the world can reach in its moments of greatest rapture. There is a soul-

satisfaction about this pleasure, there is a commendation of conscience accompanying it, there is a conviction in reference to it that it will last for ever, which invests it with a power to gratify that nothing else can produce. Well, now, if you have once experienced this, how foolish it is—to say no more—to stand in your own light and defraud yourselves by allowing any book or books to keep you from habitually repeating this most precious exercise! Hearken, hearken to the Lord. He speaks to you in righteousness. He will speak to you, indeed, in other things, for it is just in proportion as your heart is in the Scriptures that you recognize His voice in other things; you recognize His voice in outward things, and in the movements of His providence, just in proportion as you are listening to Him in the Bible.

II. Now if you really “know righteousness” thus, the fact itself will expose you to reproach among men. You will be called precise, peculiar, “righteous over much;” odious, reviling and opprobrious epithets which have always been applied to those who are really serving God, will be applied to you. For this reason it is, that you find in the Bible so many exhortations not to mind such things. And this brings us to the next point to be noticed from the text, namely, the exhortation to the people described: “Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.” It cannot be denied, and though we feel no pleasure in repeating it, yet as it is true we may not attempt to conceal it—it cannot be denied that there is much enmity against God in the natural heart of man. One apostle, indeed, says that “the heart by nature is enmity against God,” while another declares that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God.” Now the “enmity against God” which is in man’s heart, vents itself against God’s children. The men of the world deny that there is enmity in their hearts against God himself; and we are willing to admit that there is not enmity against what they consider God. For they have a convenient notion of what God is; they consider Him as a Being who will connive at their infirmities; and against such a Being—a Being so merciful that He will not punish any one, so convenient and so conniving as to suit their purpose—against such a Being, the creature of their own imagination, they have not enmity. They blush when we charge them with enmity against God, and they feel that the charge is false. They say, “We do not hate God, we love Him!” that is, they love what they think to be God; according to the expression in the Psalms, “Ye have thought Me to be altogether such an one as yourselves.” Still there is enmity against the true God, and when His real character is set forth in the Scriptures, then there arises a struggle in such minds. “Is that true? We do not love that; but is it true?” They deny that that is the true character of God though it be written in the Bible, and they acknowledge in fact, that if it were, they should hate Him. Now whether they know it or not, they do hate Him, and whenever His people live in some measure according to His law, they come in for a share of the hatred. “The servant is not above his Lord; if they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, what else shall they call His household?” “If ye were of the world,” says Christ, “the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hateth you.” The expression of this hatred is often very painful. When it comes in reproach from those who ought to love us by nature as well as religion; when it comes in secret revilings which reach our ears afterwards through other sources; when it comes in sneers and scoffs, it is indeed difficult to bear; and some are so alarmed, so terrified by this, as to

modify their conduct, yield their purpose, and darken their enjoyments, rather than break altogether with their friends. I have no doubt that this is the reason why there is so much temporising among Christians. They do it in kindness, their object being not to break with their family or their friends who cannot feel as they feel, or see as they see; and rather than incur reproach by singularity and peculiarity in their walk, they consent to walk only as half-Christians. This attempt, however, fails of its object. You must either go back all the way, or you must incur reproach, and by temporising you will incur the additional reproach of inconsistency.

The exhortation of the text is, "*Fear ye not the reproach of men;*" and this harmonises with our Lord's language to His disciples, such language being often repeated. "*Fear them not,*" said He, just after telling them that it was enough for the disciple to be as his Master and the servant as his Lord; "*fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.*" Your feelings are all numbered as well as your hairs, and the smallest reproaches that wound you are known to Him as well as the sparrows, not one of which can fall to the ground without His permission. "*Fear not, therefore; be stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" Where is the line of demarcation between the church and the world? Where is the separation between the Lord's people and the people of the world? Is it clearly marked? Is it as well defined in fact, as it is in Scripture? If not, what is the cause? Has the world changed? Has that become Christian? or has the church declined and become worldly?

Thus, you see, you are not to fear the reproach which will inevitably attend walking with God. You are in an enemy's country, and if you be true to your absent King, the enemy will reproach you. The world is in rebellion against its absolute Sovereign; sin is republicanism against Heaven, democracy against the King. O ye loyalists, show your colours, confess your Sovereign, and He will confess you before all men. I have little doubt, that, whatever may be the case in private life, of which of course we can know but little except in our own spheres, this exhortation is one especially needed as regards public life. It is a matter of burning shame to the Christians of this land, that, at a time when every vain imagination of man finds its public advocates, when everything which is calculated to disturb the nation finds its public orators and its public meetings, when every scheme of Beelzebub finds attractive publicity, the cause of God languishes, and the few who attempt to give it publicity meet with reproach. This is a sad blot on the modern history of England. Let men say what they will of it, it is a fact, that in a day when publicity is acknowledged to have power, when it is acknowledged that the public mind is moved by agitation and by the use of means, while every scheme of man finds adequate, eloquent, energetic advocates, the cause of God is not so maintained. I doubt not that some think, that this is not the right way to promote that cause. What, then, do they do? Let them adopt some other method. I am willing to credit the sincerity of any man who objects to one way of doing the work, if he adopt some other; but if he object to every

way that is proposed by others, and propose none himself, then I cannot acknowledge his sincerity. Nor can he himself claim credit for it ; by himself he is condemned.

III. "Fear ye" not, then, "the reproach of men." And hear now the reason why it should not be feared : "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." What are these men, of whom you are afraid ? What are the greatest men who set themselves on the side of the world, and against the cause of true religion—the rulers or statesmen of this or any other land ? Yet a little while, and the "worm shall feed upon them, the moth shall eat them ;" and who are they, then, that we should fear them ? Consider your God. "Lift up your eyes to the heaven above ; look upon the earth beneath ; the heavens themselves shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die." "They that dwelt therein" in the greatest luxury a few years ago, where are they now ? Where are they who dwelt in England and ruled over it a few years ago ? And where shall they be a few years hence, who rule over England now ? My dear brethren, fear not the reproach of men. If you would rise above it, remember Him whom you serve ; remember that what is right will always prove to be what is safe in the long run ; remember that present safety, or apparent safety, procured by a dereliction of acknowledged duty, or the omission of what your heart tells you it would be well to do, is a dangerous safety. It is but a prolonging of the calm that precedes the hurricane ; there is no real safety but in what is right ; they who are on God's side may well think so, and act so, and leave it to Him to controul the result.

The second reason assigned in the text why God's people should thus act is, that "His righteousness shall be for ever." The unchangeableness of God's salvation is "from generation to generation." That which makes a man righteous is the same always, the merits of Christ ; that which gives power to His salvation is the same always, the presence and agency of the Holy Ghost. He that did deliver, does and will deliver. Now mark what follows. The church, thus admonished, cries to God ; hear, I entreat you, what the cry is, in order that you may adopt it. "Awake, O wake up on strength, O arm of the Lord ;" "O Lord, arise among us, and with Thy great might succour us." When an arm is paralysed, or has become feeble, we say that it is asleep. In this figurative way the church cries—"Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord." And then she pleads what God had done in time past as a reason why He should again interfere on her behalf. "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab"—that is, Egypt—"and wounded the dragon?"—that is, Pharaoh the king of Egypt. "Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep ; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over ?" "Is the arm of the Lord shortened" since He stretched it out over Egypt, and astonished the people with His judgments ? Is the arm of the Lord straitened since He dried up the Red Sea, and made a passage in it for His chosen people to pass through ? No, it is the same as it was then to any who lean upon it. Why should you be afraid of man ? Do you really rest in the bosom of Omnipotence ? Are you indeed supported by the hand of God ? Then serve Him, take care to do only what He approves, and ye have nothing to fear : you will then stand secure amidst "the crash of worlds." Oh, my dear friends, endeavour to realise the presence, the power, and the sustaining hand of God. For since He has done what is here described, thence we conclude what He will do. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and

come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Well, then, there is an answer to that. "I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" Who art thou that fearest man and forgettest thy God? Your Friend is the maker of heaven, who laid the foundations of heaven and earth, and who sustaineth both; and who art thou, then, that thou "hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor," as if he were ready to destroy? "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" What can destroy you? I grant that mischief may come upon your mortal body; I grant that it may please God to allow you, as He allowed His people of old, to be in captivity or in exile, in sorrow or in sickness. Either or all of these things may come upon you, but none of them can really hurt you; they will all serve rather to accomplish His purposes with regard to you. He hath made the hand that would destroy; He hath made the smith who holds the tongs and the iron in the fire: every weapon in the hand of the destroyer is His, and no weapon formed against His servants shall prosper. There may be captivity or exile; and there may be worse than these; but we read in the next verse—"the captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail." Why not wait patiently? Israel was captive, Israel was hasty, Israel was impatient, but we read, "I am the Lord thy God that divided the sea." Wait on Him; be not impatient to be delivered from your captivity; trust to Him and your "bread" shall not "fail." 'Is Israel low? Yet not so low as Abraham was, and remember "the rock whence ye are hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." "Remember Abraham your father and Sarah who bare you." And what were they? Abraham was a poor idolater in the land of Uz. But I called him, I blessed him, I increased him. Are you reduced to extremity now? You are not so low as he was till I taught him and placed him in the land of Canaan.'

The Lord of hosts shall prevail. The hosts of heaven and the hosts of earth are His; angels and men, with all those smaller creatures which He uses as His instruments, the hosts of flies and the hosts of locusts with which He subdued the Egyptians; all these are in His hands, and you hath He laid upon His bosom of everlasting love. Come, then, hearken to Him and fear not man. Be decided for God; be zealous and faithful. Perform your duty in the place which He has assigned to you; take care how you spend your time, how you spend your money, how you employ your talents, how you exert your influence, and what you perceive to be His will concerning you, who hath given you what you have, placed you where you are, and made you what you are; whatever you can see manifestly to be His will concerning you, do it without consulting flesh and blood, looking to the right hand or the left, or fearing the reproach it may bring upon you of over-zeal amongst worldly men. There is amongst the best intentioned of us, an overweening deference for what the world calls prudence. Anything like zeal we scarcely know where to find—it is so lost. The world laughs and sneers and scoffs at such a representation of Christianity as this, saying, 'This is nothing but the enthusiasm of the advocate. Where are the samples of such a church? We hear of such people, but we look for them in vain.' Let them not look in vain; "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." Separate from the world; be men of God, that those who are not so, seeing these things, may "glorify your Father which is in heaven."

THE SEED IN THE HEART.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. DANIEL MOORE, M.A.

PREACHED IN CAMDEN CHURCH, CAMBERWELL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 4, 1849.

“And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”—Mark iv. 26—29.

THERE is this difference between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom which cometh from above,—the one can only derive greatness from the subjects with which it deals, the other can confer greatness on whatsoever it employs for the purposes of its own illustration. Human philosophy strains, soars, wings its bold flight to the highest heavens—Christian philosophy descends, stoops, puts majesty on the field-flower, and stamps dignity on a blade of grass.

Of this characteristic of our Lord's teaching we have had a striking example in the second lesson of this morning's service. The chapter, you will find, contains three parables, designed to unfold the nature and progress of the Gospel kingdom; and in each the type of the idea in our Lord's mind is taken from the processes of vegetation. Thus, in the first, we have the seed cast in different kinds of soil; in the second, we have corn gradually ripening to the time of harvest; and in the third, we have the oriental mustard-plant spreading and growing until it becomes a tree in which the fowls of heaven may lodge.

I take for our evening's meditation the second of these parables. Like the other two, it will be found susceptible of a two-fold form of illustration—the one designed to illustrate the triumphs of the Gospel in the world, the other to set forth the growth of personal religion in the heart.

I. On the former of these, I will touch but slightly.

“The kingdom of heaven” is manifestly the Gospel dispensation, or God's method of dealing with sinners under the Gospel. “The seed” is the Word—the sower, the Gospel ministry—the soil, the heart of man.

Now we are told that the sower, after he has cast in the seed, sleeps and rises night and day. He is not indifferent to its growth—but he can do no more than he has done; he can neither command the sun, nor unlock the clouds, nor stay the breath of rough and unkindly winds. The earth must “bring forth fruit of herself.” The apostle also, you will remember, affirms a similar principle: “Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase.” Many churches which the apostles planted are now decayed and withered things; and where the case is otherwise, the success is owing neither to the watchfulness of human oversight, nor to the strength of

a human arm. The founder of such flourishing church has long "slept," night and day—slept calmly and happily, in beatific rest; the church, meanwhile, "springeth and groweth up, he knoweth not how."

And this, you perceive, is another characteristic of the Gospel progress in the world, namely, the unseen and unexpected causes of its success. There is nothing in which there is such an utter confounding of human expectations, as the rise and fall of Christian communities. In the prosperity of the church there is a mysterious under-current of untraced and untraceable influences; the chariots of the Redeemer seem to move on without the application of any motive power; enemies oppose, friends wax cold, spiritual watchmen "sleep night and day"—yet "the seed springeth and groweth up, man knoweth not how."

But further: as applied to the Gospel kingdom, the parable declares that whatever hindrance it may meet with, it must go on, and spread and prosper. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The seed of God, brethren, cannot die; the triumphs of Christ cannot stop; the Sun of righteousness can never withdraw His shinings; He must "go forth from the heavens, and make His circuit unto the ends thereof." The daily accretions may be small, and the transitions from the blade to the ear may be scarcely visible; but still, Christ must reign; "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands" must dilate and swell; nation after nation of the Saviour's usurped inheritance must be redeemed, until He shall reign over a converted world, ripe for glory as "a shock of corn in its season."

And this, it is intimated in the parable, will be the great consummation of all human things. "But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." The last foe subdued, the last hostile kingdom destroyed, the last rebellious heart softened into penitence or crushed into everlasting subjection—a loud voice from the temple will cry unto Him that sitteth in the cloud, "Thrust in thy sickle, for the time is come for me to reap; the harvest of the earth is ripe." Then, my brethren, will be the day of mighty separations, of vast disclosures; then will be the commencement of endless bliss or of eternal heart-burnings. Having separated "the precious from the vile," the fruitful from the barren, those who rejected the seed from those who have brought forth fruit unto the harvest, Christ will "gather the wheat into His garner," and will burn up all the rest with "unquenchable fire."

Thus much, therefore, may suffice for the illustration of the parable, so far as it relates to the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the world, the final ingathering of the spiritual harvest, the reducing of the apostate nations until they become "kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

II. Individually, however, our concern lies more in the second interpretation of the parable; namely, that which makes it to represent the ascendancy and growth of true religion in the heart—the forming and growing and perfecting of the Christian man—the successive stages through which a seed of the Lord's planting has to pass, before it ripen into a full ear of grace, and become as "full corn in the ear," to be gathered into the garner of immortality.

On this interpretation we shall have to view spiritual religion in four aspects: first, in its connection with external agencies; secondly, in the invisible methods of its succeeding processes; thirdly, in its continued progress to a sanctified maturity; and by way of conclusion, its gathering into the harvest

1. Now let us, first, consider spiritual religion in its connection with external agencies.

In considering this, you will do well to observe, that the parable stands related to the larger one of the sower and the seed, which goes immediately before. The obvious design of that parable is to shew the different effects of the Gospel upon different classes of human character; and that there might be no mistake about the method of its interpretation, the great Teacher has Himself shown to us that all Gospel hearers may be divided into four classes, of which three will be found to exhibit nothing but spiritual barrenness, whilst one only "brings forth fruit unto perfection." In closing this parable, our Lord adds the impressive moral—"Take heed what ye hear;" "weigh well the measure of your spiritual responsibilities; fruit will produce fruit, and grace improved will ripen to grace matured—but indifference, carelessness, neglect of means and ordinances, will destroy the seed, even before the green blade appears." "For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath." And then follows our present parable. It assumes, you see, that we all stand in a certain practical and voluntary relation to outward agencies. We are not to regard ourselves as the passive and powerless recipients of heavenly influences, just as the ground might be of the seed which is cast into it by the sower; but we are required to use diligently all the appliances of the husbandman, leaving the rest to Him who hath the disposal of "the early and latter rain."

We have, then, in the text to do with two forms of spiritual agency; the first is the seed, and the second is the sower.

"The seed is the Word." And it is so called, because it contains "life in itself," because it can communicate a principle of vitality to the soul, and because, when received into the soil of a good, and honest, and teachable and obedient heart, it will assuredly bring forth holy fruit. In this statement no inherent or self-existing power is supposed in the Word, apart from Divine agency—any more than the material seed could be supposed to have the power of fructifying, without the favouring concurrence of outward elements; but it is meant, that where there is no voluntary obstruction, arising either from man's negligence or from man's sin, the Spirit of God will invariably accompany the casting in of this incorruptible seed, so that every seed shall yield its blade, and every blade proceed to "the full corn in the ear."

The other agency spoken of is the sower; and this, I have said, is the Gospel ministry. "The kingdom of heaven is as if a man cast seed into the ground." Yes, brethren, we are commanded of God to scatter the life-giving seed. Whenever we ascend this sacred place, we are as a man casting seed into the ground; though how mournful is the reflection, that so much of this seed is wasted—that on the wayside some, in stony ground some, amongst the thorns and briars of worldly anxieties and cares some fall, but that only little reappears in the green blade of early piety, or in the golden ear of saintly perfectness! Still, sow we must, and scatter we must. The eye of God is following us; He marks what becomes of each one of these falling grains—how one lies disregarded on the surface of the worldly heart, how another sinks no deeper than the first stratum of fitful and impulsive piety—how the young choke the seed with pleasures, how the middle-aged destroy it with worldly ambitions, how the old stifle it with corroding cares; yet be assured, that dead as this seed may seem, it springeth up, ay, and will spring up in another world, even if it spring not up in this, and bear its testimony against all who neglected or despised the message of the most high God, saying, "A man cast seed into the ground."

2. But let us consider spiritual religion in the invisible methods of its succeeding processes. "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself;" "the man sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed springeth and groweth up, he knoweth not how."

This passage, you see, affirms the mysteriousness of the Divine process, in regard to the beginning of spiritual life. The analogy is perfect. Vegetation has no greater mystery than the manner in which the material seed becomes quickened. Into the same rut, at the same depth of earth, to be exposed to the influences of the same sunshine and wind and shower, the husbandman shall cast two seeds; the one shall fructify, and the other dies. And is it not so with regard to the seed of the Word? Is there any discovering of that subtle law, by which the preaching of the self-same Word becomes powerless here, and effectual there—becomes "a savour of life" to this man, and "a savour of death" to that—causes one member of a family to listen to the preaching of the Gospel as to the dull recurrence of Sabbath monotony, whilst to the other it comes home with power, and with a voice louder than "the voice of many waters" bids him "arise from the dead?" No, brethren; and we may bless God for this our ignorance of the course which His preached Word takes—we may thank Him that His Word is left to the wise and secret disposals of Him who of Himself shall say "whether shall prosper, this or that." It teaches us to throw ourselves more entirely upon God; it makes us recognize more absolutely the sovereignty of effectual grace; it causes us to feel how all that we can bring to bear on the Lord's work—of reasoning to convince, of learning to support, of eloquence to persuade, of illustration to attract and charm—must yet all wait on a power which is above us, even on God who "giveth the increase."

But besides the ignorance of the sower, as to when the seed is springing and growing up, there is often equal ignorance on the part of him who is the recipient of these saving influences. The forming of the spiritual principle in man's heart is compared by our Lord to the wind—one of the most resistless, yet subtle elements, in the natural world. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." And so it is in the conversion of man. There is an unperceived influence exerting itself on all his moral and spiritual faculties; his will may retain its liberty, his judgment may put forth its power, his mind may be still accessible to the same forms of outward persuasions and inducements,—and yet there is an influence constraining, but not compulsory, which seems to bend back all the former dispositions of his nature, causing principles and desires and feelings to spring up in his heart, "he knoweth not how." His only evidence, his only knowledge, is a conscious moral result; the mode of operation he leaves contentedly among the arcana of heavenly science; sufficient for him to be able to reply to all objectors—"One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see."

The words "knoweth not how" may refer not only to our ignorance of the method of God's spiritual processes, but also to our ignorance of the fact that those processes have actually commenced. In the vegetable kingdom we know that there is a good deal of underground work; and two seeds, having equal depth of earth, and being equally impregnated with a vital principle, may yet widely differ as to the time when they shall appear visible in the form of a springing blade. And it is so in the spiritual kingdom also. Children of God are not themselves competent judges of the first communication and growing up of vital principles in the heart. There may be pressing upon the spirit a weight of superincumbent earthliness, effectually keeping down any outward,

spiritual manifestation, and yet for all that, the work of God's husbandry may be going on—the seed may be bursting, the hard clod may be yielding, and if the eye could but penetrate beneath the surface, we should behold already formed the green blade of life and piety. Be not cast down, my brethren, at the outset of your Christian course, if some of the indications of spiritual life be not presently visible: it is a season of struggle and darkness and difficulty, and your young faith is as yet undisciplined for the encounter. Besides, Satan is found to be most vigorous in his temptations then; the two special seasons for the adversary to employ his assaults against the child of God may, I think, be regarded as his birth and his death—the girding on of his armour and the putting it off. In the latter case, indeed, they are but the fierce malignity of despair: he knows that his time is short—that another breath of prayer, another bold act of faith, and another joyous spring of high and heaven-born hope, will place his victim far beyond his reach: but at the young Christian he takes a more steady and studied aim; he tries to wear out his infant and unpractised strength, to damp his young ardour by presenting before him great and insuperable difficulties—he makes his corruptions strong and his confidence weak, throws a damp upon all the tokens he has received from God, and tempts him to conclude within himself that he is not a true subject of Divine grace. But, my young Christian friends, your reply to the tempter at such seasons must be this: you are in earnest about your soul's salvation, and that is a sure "token for good," even if you had no other. A few transient convictions, indeed, you might otherwise have—that would be only the casting the seed into the ground; but when those convictions become abiding, working things, prompting to endeavour and action, then you may safely conclude that the work must indeed be of God; the seed is then assuredly taking root, the elements of vitality are at work within, and though at present it be all underground, though the eye of sense be unable to discern either sprout or blade, yet you must both believe and wait for the promise, that the seed shall spring and grow up, though you "know not how."

3. The parable points out, in the third place, the certain progressiveness of true religion. There is "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear."

Nothing can be more conclusive than these words to the fact, that there is no such thing as standing still in religion; nothing can be more fatal to that fiction of some enthusiasts, which makes our conversion to God a terminated and finished act—a thing of dates, and names, and outward circumstances. Here it is assumed, that there must be a growth, an advancing, a progressing from one stage of the spiritual life to an other. And this, as you know, is not the only instance in Scripture where the same principle is maintained; the Bible teems with analogies leading to the like conclusion. Why is it that we read of "babes" and "young men" and "fathers" in Christ? Why do we read of "tender plants" and "tall cedars" in the house of our God? Why do we read of some lamb, requiring to be carried tenderly in the shepherd's arms; whilst we also read of others who are "sheep," strong in faith, and following the shepherd in all the paths of holy obedience? No, brethren, unless you desire to construct your spiritual theories upon exceptions—exceptions so noticeable and rare as to confirm the rule from which they depart—you must hold that all true religion is a spreading and an advancing thing. God leads on the converted soul step by step; He restores the features of our lost spiritual image little by little; He destroys the dominant passions of "the old man" one by one,—leading us on "from strength to strength," till in the

perfect righteousness of Christ we appear before Him in Zion. Hence, as St. Peter tells us, we are to "add to our faith virtue, and to virtue diligence, and to diligence temperance, and to temperance godliness." "The path of the just" is to shine with an ever-increasing brightness; the stream of grace is to widen as it nears the ocean of glory; and from the blade in its tender shoot, and from the ear in its golden promise, the soul is to pass on to that higher and more ripened state, when it shall bring forth those "fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God."

It is a fact, then, brethren, and as I believe, a universal fact—that true religion in the heart must be a progressive thing. In vegetation we cannot realise the fact of a blade of grass always continuing a blade; it may wither, and die, and rot, but if it lives, it lives to grow and to bear fruit. And in like manner, that we should always be "babes in Christ," always dwarfs, always at the same growth, always at the same distance from "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," were most strange and unnatural. It were like saying that the heaven of God is within us, and yet affects not the surrounding mass; that the fire of God is in our hearts, and yet all the adjacent stubble remains untouched and unconsumed; that aged trees as we are, we put forth nothing but the tender shoot, and patriarchs as we should be in spiritual things, we are but as infants of a day old. Brethren, neither grace nor nature can ever be thus put out of course: God moves by fixed laws—and progression is one of those laws; and if your religion be not a mere profession and name, it will have its marked and discernible stages. Short intervals of comparison may not discover any material or susceptible advance—any more than two successive days would discover any sensible difference in a blade of grass; but a comparison of longer interval, a looking into our state on two succeeding anniversaries, should evidence progress, should satisfy us that God is more in our thoughts, that the world is less in our affections, that over self and its desires we have acquired a greater mastery, and that "the life which we now live in the flesh" we feel more and more to be "a life of faith in the Son of God."

4. And now, brethren, in conclusion, let us contemplate the end, the great consummation, the final gathering of these ripe sheaves into the garner of life and immortality. "But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

Ever advancing as may be, and should be, our moral condition here, it will never, in any appreciable degree at least, bring us near to the sanctity and blessedness of the heavenly state; there is an infinitude of holy attainment lying far beyond the highest measures of saintly excellence ever attained by a Christian upon earth; and this infinitude is traversed and compassed by the dying spirit, with one instantaneous bound, when at death he consigns his stained and torn garments to the custody of the grave, and puts on the white vesture of God and of the Lamb. Then he waits his final consummation of bliss. Thenceforth, in holy and happy expectation, he rests with all the redeemed of God; he walks in uprightness through the mansions of the invisible world. No sorrow mars his bliss, no sin assails his steadfastness, no fears disturb his repose, but he sleeps in Jesus; in all the activities of saintly consciousness, in all the fervour of bright and undying hopes, in all the sweet peacefulness of God, he waits for the coming of his Lord, and the hearing of that voice from Him that sitteth upon the cloud—"Thrust in thy sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. & REV. HENRY MONTAGU VILLIERS, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL,
ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JAN. 28, 1849.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—
Zechariah iv. 6.

IN the work of God in the heart, and for the work for God in our lives, we require the operation of God's Holy Spirit. Whether we desire ourselves to be "built up a spiritual temple unto the Lord," or whether we desire to build some material temple unto God, the truth still remains the same—we must have the help of God and of God's Holy Spirit.

Man, owing to his sinful and deceitful heart, continually lays claim to that to which he has the least right; man is continually seeking and claiming for himself independence. Our first parents sought for themselves independence, and our first parents fell, and rued the day when they ceased to live upon the Lord their God. And so it is in the present day. They are happy, and they alone are happy, who can commit all their ways unto the Lord their God, who can see His hand in things temporal, and who rest upon Him altogether for things eternal.

No unconverted man does this—the unconverted man "makes flesh his arm;" but one of the characteristics of God's children is, that they rest upon the arm of the Lord, and are prepared to give Him all the glory. Thus the apostle Paul says, in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians—"By the grace of God I am what I am; and this grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I"—no self-confidence, no self-dependence—"yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

Now, my brethren, I do not propose dwelling this afternoon upon the immediate context, or the original application of the passage which I have selected for the text. The history, doubtless, is well known to the greater portion of this congregation—the encouragement, at least, which God gave to His servant in building His temple, telling him, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain! before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." But I shall limit our meditations this afternoon to the operations of the Holy Ghost, in building a spiritual temple to the Lord.

On the last occasion of my addressing you, I reminded you of this one important fact, that whether we are converted or unconverted, we must be inhabited by some spirit or other, and that if we be not inhabited by the Spirit of

God, if we do not become "a habitation of God through the Spirit," we continue to be inhabited by Satan; as we are born, so do we live, and so shall we die, except we are born again of the Holy Ghost. I now purpose continuing that subject in a measure, by pointing out, first the necessity for a spiritual agency, and secondly, the results of that agency.

I. Now the necessity for this spiritual agency arises from man's wants for earth, and also from man's wants for heaven.

1. It arises, first, from his wants for earth.

He needs life; for by nature he is dead. He needs to be relieved from that state in which every unconverted man lies till he obtains this life from God. He is "dead in trespasses and sins." There are persons who are outwardly moral, bearing the highest character among their fellow-men, but who nevertheless are pronounced by God to be dead; they may have "a name to live," but they are "dead;" they have not obtained spiritual life. And how is that spiritual life to be obtained? The text will explain the matter. It is "not by might, nor by power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And thus again, in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel we are told that "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The same truth is set before us in the first chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." If, then, we are to have life spiritual, life within our hearts, it must be the effect of God's sovereign mercy, by the operation of His Holy Spirit.

But man wants light, as well as life. He wants light; for he is dark by nature. St. Paul directly asserts that in his epistle to the Ephesians, desiring that church not to "walk as the Gentiles walked, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened;" but this is the condition of every unconverted man. Man was once created pure; by the fall he lost that purity—by the same fall his understanding became darkened, and he requires to have that understanding renewed, before he can in anywise comprehend the plain and simple truths which concern his everlasting peace. Here is the great reason why so many read their Bibles and do not derive profit from their Bibles; here is the reason why so many are contented with their self-righteousness, knowing nothing of the righteousness which is of God; that they continue walking in that same darkness in which they were originally created, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." But when the Holy Spirit begins to work within the heart, then we are told, that we have "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." None but the Holy Spirit of God enlightens man. In the Gospel according to St. John, in the same chapter to which I have already referred, we are told that Christ is that light: "He is the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And how does He enlighten?

Not merely by the teaching of man—not by the instruction given to natural talent alone—but by the teaching of His Holy Spirit ; for we are distinctly told, that “ Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but that it is God only that giveth the increase.”

But if he want light and life, so also does he require love, because by nature man is at enmity with God. We are told in the epistle to the Romans, that “ the carnal mind is enmity against God.” In the eighth chapter you have that statement most distinctly brought before you, that “ to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace ; because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” When the man is converted, however, there is no longer that enmity against God's law, but on the contrary, as we read the apostle's own experience in the seventh of the Romans—“ I consent unto the law that it is good.” And again, he draws this conclusion—“ Wherefore the commandment is holy and just and good.” But by what means is this life imparted ? It is not by the power of man ; it is beyond his own volition ; it is not merely the effect of resolution, or a sense of duty ; but we are told in the 110th Psalm, that “ God makes His people willing in the day of His power.” Therefore, it is “ not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Again : man requires health ; for he is spiritually sick. Like Israel of old, who loathed the simple food in the wilderness, so is it with man by nature ; he is always seeking something new ; he is not contented with the plain preaching of “ Jesus Christ and Him crucified ;” there must be something of “ the enticing words of man's wisdom,” something which may tickle the ear instead of prick the heart, something which may be gratifying to the mind rather than that which shall change the affections. But God gives this to His own people ; it is “ not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit,” that He changes the heart—that the Bread of life (which is Christ himself) becomes precious to the inquirer's soul. He then desires the water of life, and finds that as he draws nearer to God, to obtain supplies of that Spirit, so is his own soul refreshed and made more meet for all the difficulties and trials of his journey through this wilderness of sin.

And once more I may say, he requires confidence in God ; for by nature he distrusts God. He speaks, indeed, of looking to a God of mercy, and pretends to trust God with his never-dying soul, while he dares not trust Him with his every-day business, while he dares not commit his body to his God, but lives in the full belief that he is a hard Master. And yet this confidence, this trust, this loving faith in God is not in his own power. Faith is the gift of God, and without this faith there never will be that cheerful obedience which is due to God ; for without it we never shall realise that all-important doctrine, that whether there is prosperity or adversity, yet still does our God “ do all things well.”

2. But this is not the only reason why we require the Spirit of God. We need all these things for our personal happiness and edification on earth ; but we also require that Holy Spirit for heaven. And here I will only mention two things—a title to heaven, and a fitness for the enjoyment of heaven.

First, there must be a title to heaven. And how is this obtained ? “ Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” Without the shedding of Christ's precious blood, my dear brethren, you and I are heirs of hell.

Except that blood had been poured out by our blessed Lord and Saviour, neither you nor I could have had any hope of everlasting life. "All were dead," and "Christ died for all." It is not for you or me to say whether we all shall benefit by that death hereafter; there are many in this assembly, I fear, to whom the Lord's words may again be applied—"Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life." But if the possession has been purchased by His precious blood-shedding, it becomes ours by virtue of our regeneration and adoption into the family of God. We are regenerated, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." We are adopted into His family, by the application of the blood of Christ to the conscience by that same Spirit. Having laid hold of Christ, then, by faith, we have received Him into our hearts; "and to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." And our interest, as felt by us, is known to exist in the same way—by the teaching of the Holy Spirit of God. Thus the promise of the Comforter was accompanied by this declaration, that He should "take of the things of Christ and declare them unto us." Therefore, if there were a title, it would be no comfort to us without our knowledge of its justness and without our being assured that it really referred to ourselves. And this all depends, not upon our learning, not upon our rank, not upon anything which this world or man can give: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

But still, there is something more that is required: we need meetness, or fitness for heaven. This, indeed, does not depend upon our outward circumstances, but, as in every one of the cases to which I have referred, upon the inward working of the Holy Ghost. It is that same Spirit which supplies our daily want of grace; so that we may apply to this subject that striking, though very difficult passage in the epistle to the Ephesians, where we are told that we shall "come in the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Men cannot command this supply—they must ask for it; and God himself supplies it, on account of His Son, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. And thus you will find the believer is transformed into the image of God. God never forsakes His own handiwork; therefore, when He begins by enlightening us and giving us this spiritual life, then we have the firstfruits of a still greater harvest, and we may be well assured that He will continue the work even to the very end.

Without these things, my dear brethren, what would heaven be to us? If we were unholy, if we had not this grace, if we were not transformed into the image of God, what enjoyment could heaven have for us? With unholy hearts we should be permitted to see nothing but holiness around us; with hearts and affections prone to earthly things, we should be called to a heavenly service; with our hearts weighed down and depressed by the things of time, we should be called to sing the praises of our God day and night. And how should we

be fitted for such a work as that? We need, therefore, you see, not only the Holy Spirit to help us in our journey here, but to make us fit for that home which is prepared for us above.

Recollect, then, my brethren, that this is no extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit. It is not a work which was to be performed upon the apostle Paul, and not upon us; but it is the ordinary work of the Holy Ghost—it is the necessary work of that Spirit, without which neither you nor I shall be permitted to enter heaven; and if we were permitted to enter there, without it we should have no enjoyment in the presence of our God.

II. But now it is time that I should pass on at once to speak of the results which follow from this spiritual agency. And this must be done in a few brief remarks.

In the first place, when we can feel that the Holy Ghost is working within us, there is security for us in the midst of all the temptations and trials of this life. I do not believe that there is any man, let him have been holy even from his very birth, let him have been living for God and living to serve God all the days of his life, who is free from sin, or who is not likely to fall; but I do assert that he will not fall for ever. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Our security is this, that when we have become the habitation of God's Holy Spirit, and that Spirit is working within us, there is no stronger one who can drive Him out, there is no one who can take His place; He will keep us, even to the end.

So again, the subject suggests to us the greatest encouragement in the midst of our many difficulties; for who does not know, that the road to everlasting life is beset with difficulties? There may be “a great and effectual door opened” to us; “but there are many adversaries.” And who shall be able to overcome these “many adversaries?” None but they who have the Spirit of God working within them. This was the feeling of Nehemiah, when he replied to the enemies that rose up against him—“The God of heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build.” And surely this is a ground of encouragement for you and for me, if we are desirous of being a spiritual temple unto God; that while there may be adversaries on all sides of us, trying to allure us here or drive us there, we can still say that God is on our side, and that He being with us, we know that He will prosper us. And we may look forward with the same confidence hereafter to the full enjoyment of everlasting life; for we are told in the epistle to the Ephesians, that believers are “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.”

Now, my brethren, is it not the case, that among those to whom I am permitted to address myself this afternoon, there are many who are really in earnest upon the subject of their salvation, but who having many a time (as it were) set out upon their journey heavenwards, have found their own weakness, have had to mourn over their broken resolutions, and have been inclined to despond? Perhaps there are some here, who have even given up all that earnest exertion which once they made. But let me once more endeavour to set them forth upon their road to Zion; let me remind them, that perhaps hitherto they have been working in their own strength, and that so long as they depended upon that, they were certain to fail; because God himself has declared

—“It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Here, then, must be your confidence. Do not, therefore, be led away from this singleness of purpose, from choosing “the one thing needful,” because there may be much opposition raised against you. Recollect the answer of Nehemiah to those who wished to interrupt him in his work: “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.” And what was the result of this? “It came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that the work was wrought of our God.” Do not, then, my brethren, attempt to serve God with a half-hearted service; the failure will be as complete in itself as it will be miserable and wretched to you. Be decided, if you are really seeking to be God's children; be decided, if you are desirous of being admitted into everlasting happiness. Give your hearts unreservedly to God; be often at the foot of the throne of grace, imploring more help from above. Remember, that however numerous and powerful your enemies may be, still there is One that is for you who is greater than all. Be decided, I repeat, recollecting the simple truth, that if you are on God's side, you must be on the victorious side, and that the result of the contest depends not upon yourselves, but upon God, for He himself has declared —“Not by might, nor by power, but My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

But one word more to another class. Is there any one in this assembly, who not only is not in earnest for his own soul's welfare, but is in earnest in trying to hinder the work of God in others? Is there one such Sanballat here? If so, let me remind him that there is One above who sees all that malice, who perceives all that enmity, and who considers that any opposition offered to His children is offered to Himself. That same question which He put to the persecuting Saul, He puts again to you —“Why persecutest thou Me?” Oh! how little do some scoffers reflect on this — how little do some worldly-minded men, who would prevent others being decided for God, think of this! — that they are doing it not only against their fellow-worms, but against their Saviour and their God. And what is their state? What is their power to contend with Omnipotence? My dear brethren, go and reflect upon your own absolute weakness; go and read the truth, that it is God who is against you, and that He has said that those who seek Him “shall not be ashamed.” Go and think upon what that confidence may excite — that the whole of our struggle here on earth, the whole of our warfare on this side the grave, is carried on not by our own power, or by our own spirit, but by the Spirit of God — His Spirit who Himself has said to every poor sinner, to every one who is willing to turn from his persecuting ways, and to be saved — “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

BIBLE-BURNING, AND BIBLE-SUBSTITUTES.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM COLE, A.B.,

Minister of the Parish of Wednesbury ; and Chaplain to the Marquis of Abercorn.

PREACHED (BY REQUEST) IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WEDNESBURY,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 7, 1849.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”—Deuteronomy xxix. 29.

MEN and brethren, and you, my stated hearers, and all that constitute this crowded congregation, I entreat at your hands a candid, an attentive, a prayerful consideration of the subject-matter which, by means of public notice, you are prepared to expect. The statements to be made, ponder them in your inner spirits ; the proofs to be adduced, weigh them in the “balance of the sanctuary.” And, while articles of faith are to be discussed, and evidence of their infringement to be sifted, pass lightly over, I pray you, the imperfections and the infirmities of the man who lays them before you.

It is an exciting subject, in which I have consented, for “the truth’s sake,” to engage. The most imperturbable spirit might be stirred in intermeddling with it ; minds of the soberest mould might be unduly moved while “zealously affected, though not well,” with the circumstances which we are met to consider. I fear for myself, lest I should even *seem* to speak unkindly ; or lest, through any untoward, yet unintentional agitation, betrayed by the merc feelings of sense, the sacred cause which I venture to vindicate should receive detriment ; or lest one of Christ’s “little ones” should be “offended.” I tremble lest the waters of charity should have so much as their surface ruffled in the discussion—those “waters of Shiloah that flow softly.” In the hazard of an issue so undesirable, let us “look unto Jesus,” our much insulted but most compassionate Redeemer. We will remember how HE “beareth the contradiction of sinners against Himself ;” how “He gave His back to the smiters, and hid not His face from shame and spitting.” That meekness of spirit which dwelleth in HIM and in His, will keep us in check, so as to treat dispassionately, and, as we hope and trust, to edification also, a point of fact which must, otherwise, be imbittered by controversial acrimony.

Our meditations at this time will apply to the contents generally, and to the volume itself, of our blessed and holy Bible. The case will be found to concern us in every possible way. It concerns our national privileges, as freeborn citizens of the realm of England ; it concerns our religious principles, as members of the *Protestant church*, divided though it be into differing evangelical denominations ; it concerns our individual obligations, as taken into covenant

with God, through Christ, the Son of His love. That covenant is a better portion than all the riches of earth. It is a covenant of life and peace, extended to us, in boundless mercy, from the throne of the Eternal. Its provisions exceedingly outpass all that we can ask, or wish, or enjoy, in our mortal pilgrimage here, and our immortal condition hereafter. The "things that are revealed in it belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." In the blood of Christ, as "a Lamb without spot," it secures, for us and for them, an "inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Who of us, then, is prepared to forfeit his hold upon the terms of that covenant? The mere bidding of any fallible mortal will certainly not wrest it from us. We will keep ourselves in readiness, "God being our helper," earnestly to contend for "the faith once delivered to the saints"—if only for the sake of our children, and though the struggle should cost us our life's blood.

Brethren, however slow we may be to apprehend or suspect the issue of impending events, while I am speaking, the contest for our faith is raging already. Through the concurrent circumstances of the times, the Rule itself, which prescribes and regulates that faith, is being assailed and endangered. I say, *through the circumstances of the times*; for, in the inscrutable providence of our God, the unnatural instrumentality of *so called* "Protestant councils" seems to have been combined, and neither slightly nor recently, for the strange purpose of Roman Catholic ascendancy. The arrogance of that persuasion, and of its priesthood particularly, displays itself accordingly. Its members everywhere demean themselves as though swimming in the full tide of public favour. Indeed, it is vaunted that Romanism had not attained to a watermark so high since the days of the far-famed Council of Trent. Like an experienced mariner, she is determined not to lose so good a chance in her voyage; so she has piped all her hands upon deck—she has all her rigging righted, and canvas full spread. The pilotage, which has grown old amid shoals, and breakers, and troubled waters, is not wanting to her steerage; and every advantage of wind, and water, and most skilful tacking, is put into requisition. Even in the good old town of Birmingham the ship's crew are making all way, if, peradventure, they may bring into "the desired haven" their reeling and crazy vessel; and Oscott is hard by, even close to the shore, ready to launch her "*life-boat*" at any moment of peril or emergency. But take the gauge of *all such craft*, both in "build" and in "timbers"—inspect narrowly all which is embarked in such bottoms, whether ballast, or "merchandise, or souls of men," and see whether, *singly or in mass*, they can bear any comparison with "the wooden walls of old England."

Go with me now, while I read to you, out of the public prints, an account of that occurrence which has deservedly been treated with universal reprobation, and which, as living so close to the locality where it transpired, and for the sake of the many belonging to the Romish persuasion now resident in these districts, a sense of official duty constrains me to notice.

From *Aris's Gazette*, Dec. 4, 1848.

SIR—I see in your paper of last Monday a statement that a Testament was burnt by a priest of the Church of Rome, in a house in London 'Prentice-street in this town.

I had written you a letter on the subject immediately on its occurrence; but, upon consulting with the Hon. and Rev. Grantham M. Yorke, Rector of St. Philip's, in whose Free Industrial Schools the Testament in question had been given to a little girl, I determined first, if possible, to obtain the admission of the priest to what passed between us in conversation,

As, however, publicity has been given to the occurrence before I have had time to carry out my plans, I think it best, as the minister of the district in which London 'Prentice-street is situated, to write to you at once, and say that the statement is strictly true. The priest acknowledged to me that he burnt the Testament, and also declared that he would burn every Bible or tract which he found in the houses of any of his people. He also charged me never again to enter the house of a Romanist in my district; and upon my assuring him that I should pay no attention to his command, and that the law of the land would protect my person, he said he would order his people to use "scurrilous" language towards me, and to offer me insult, if I ventured to pass their doors. Upon my appealing to him, and asking "how he dared to burn the Word of God?" he told me to go and preach in my pulpit, and not to preach to him." I merely state facts, and leave your readers to draw their own inferences from them.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOSHUA GREAVES,

Nov. 29, 1848.

Incumbent of St. Peter's, Birmingham.

The impression of the same Birmingham journal, edited the week following, and bearing date December 11, 1848, contains an admission of the fact on the part of the entire body of the whole corps of the Roman Catholic clergy in that town, and with what decency of remark appended to their certificate, let my Scripture-loving hearers determine.

We the Catholic clergy of Birmingham, having seen it stated in a letter from the Rev. Joshua Greaves, that one of our body had burnt a copy of the Protestant version of the New Testament, found in the house of a Catholic, have no hesitation at once to admit the fact; but wish at the same time to add, that the act was regretted afterwards by the clergyman by whom it was done, and strongly disapproved of by his brother clergy, as soon as known. Justice, however, requires us to state that the Catholics of Birmingham had suffered constant and great annoyance from the interference of certain Protestant clergymen or others, their agents, who frequently intrude themselves into the houses of poor Catholics, unsought for and uninvited, for the purpose of perverting their faith. It was with the knowledge that such a system was going on, and under the excitement of the moment, that the act, which it is not attempted to justify, was done. We take this opportunity of stating that the Catholic version of the sacred Scriptures is considered by us as the only one authorised for circulation amongst our own people.

St. Chad's.
BERNARD IVERS,
THOS. M. LEITH,
WM. MOLLOY.

St. Peter's.
GEORGE JEFFRIES,
MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN.

St. Mary's, Handsworth.
J. P. BURKE.

St. Chad's Birmingham, Dec. 7, 1848.

The following rejoinder from the pen of the Rev. Joshua Greaves appeared in the *Gazette* of the succeeding week (December 18, 1848); which, not having been replied to on the part of the priests, may be left to the judgment of a discerning public.

SIR—It is with much regret that I am obliged again to come before the public on the subject of the Testament which was burnt in London 'Prentice-street, in this town, by the Rev. W. Molloy, a priest of the Church of Rome, but the cause of truth demands it of me. It is stated in the apology put forth by that Rev. gentleman and his coadjutors, "that the act was regretted afterwards by the clergyman by whom it was done, and strongly disapproved of by his brother clergy as soon as known," and that it was "under the excitement of the moment that the act, which it is not attempted to justify, was done."

Now, Sir, I ask you, and I ask the public, are these statements consistent with the following facts? The Testament was burnt on Thursday, Nov. 16, about two o'clock p.m., and it was not till the following Saturday, about mid-day, that I had any conversation with the priest on the subject.

Being in London 'Prentice-street on the Saturday, Mr. Molloy sent for me to the house where he had burnt the Testament, to ask if I supposed that the woman to whose daughter the book had been given was a Protestant, because he had heard that I had visited her the day before. It was upon that occasion that I inquired of him whether or not he had burnt the Testament; he told me that he had, and would burn every Bible or Tract he found in the houses of his people. I warned him that I should make his words public, and he told me I was perfectly welcome to

do so. I further remember saying that I had often been told that I had unjustly charged the Romish priests with denying the Bible to their people; and his reply was to this effect— that “ You have stated the truth, and are perfectly welcome to state it when you will; you are furthering our objects in doing so.” There are several other points in the apology on which I should much like to dwell; but I think it best simply to state facts, and leave the public to judge for themselves whether the apology that this act was done in the excitement of the moment can apply to Mr. Molloy, who, after the reflection of two days, threatened to repeat the act again and again.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOSHUA GREAVES,

December 14, 1848.

Incumbent of St. Peter's, Birmingham.

With these documents ringing in our ears, and re-echoing the sympathies of our universal population, excepting the small Roman Catholic moiety, how are we to view, how are we to designate, an act of such a nature, wantonly committed by a priest of Rome, and admitted, without fear, or shame, or retraction, in the central metropolis of England? Has it not been acknowledged by the perpetrator with something that looks like vain-glorious boasting, and with everything that seems akin to gratified satisfaction? Is it not avouched, and screened under the common mantle of the priesthood of the place—and in all things, too, excepting the heat and temper with which the glibly gentleman had been actuated on the occasion?

Men will differ concerning matters of most obvious and best-ascertained meaning; but all that hear me, all that have given attention to the documents now perused, and indeed all unprejudiced persons who may have knowledge of the act in question, will pronounce that act, as with one mouth and one heart, to be an outrage, a hurtful and God-defying outrage, inflict it rudely and without provocation upon Protestant feeling, upon public decency, and upon the Truth of God. Ourselves and our children are hurt and insulted through the act and hand of any man who can be so ill-disposed to our best interests, from generation to generation, as to consign to devouring flames the copy of that Charter, which preserves the entail in the fullest use, possession, and enjoyment, of “ALL THE WORDS of this law.” Where could any one, amongst perishing mankind, ignorant by nature of all that is truly good, become acquainted with what “*belongs*” to him, because “*revealed*,” if the “words” which convey the revelation should meet the same fate in all human habitations which it has suffered, through priestly violence, in “London Prentice-street?” Where could the duty, required by our gracious Creator, be practised, or even recognised; had all been placed in a condition in which a fellow-worm could, irresponsibly, strip us of the “words of the law,” which enacts and sanctions that duty? And what think you, beloved, would be the character, and complexion, and conduct of this present world, sunk, and depraved, and evil as it is, even after all that is preached in it, and all that is taught out of “the words of this law,” if an arrest could be laid, by a surplined creature of clay, on the mighty angel which (in Revelation xiv. 6) was seen to “fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people?” Oh! let us go forth, unworthily though we be, to meet this Goliath-defiance, if only with nothing more than the “*staff*,” and the “*stones*,” and the “*sling*.” Let us “draw near to the Philistine,” for the insulted honour of your Father and my Father, of your God and my God. The comforting “help of His right hand” will enable us to do valiantly in so high an

undertaking ; while our simple aim is, to “ speak the truth in love,” and with all tenderness. We will so endeavour to point out error, and, in the meekness of wisdom, to make known the only way of escaping it, “ that those who are of the contrary part may have nothing to say against us.” We would studiously repress even that honest indignation which is *naturally* reflected over the mind’s feelings from Bible-burning malice. And yet, in the stern and unshrinking conflict to be waged, upon the ground of the Scriptures, against the strong delusions of Popery, necessity is laid upon us to impeach the priests of Rome, under the heinous charge of Bible-burning, as the hinderers of human salvation, and as the exterminators, in the fullest extent to which their rancorous hate of evangelical religion could compass it, of the Gospel of the grace of God, and of its learners and followers.

Of those two capital charges we have the fullest authentication from the church of Rome herself. Her own annals and inquisitions hold her up, to the gaze of men and of angels, as “ drunk with the blood of the saints ;” and, likewise, her countless superstitions and idolatrous practices have but too well succeeded in darkening, and even heathenizing, “ the beauty of holiness,” which had, otherwise, remained intact, in the worship of God and His Christ. A cloud of condemning, self-supplied witnesses, will thus attest that she “ hateth the light” of the Gospel—“ that she will not come to the light,” but will, rather, extinguish it in the earth, lest her deeds be made manifest.

The issue now to be tried, upon the evidence which shall be laid before you, is a case pending between the most conflicting and irreconcilable parties. It is an issue, in fact, which lies between the only living and true God on the one part, and the “ deceivableness of unrighteousness” on the other part. Let us go into the evidence, and examine the case ; let us “ faithfully and impartially try, and true issue make”—and, as it were, “ without fear, favour, or affection”—and I can have no doubt about the result. You will pronounce against Baal and his worshippers, as did the convicted Israelites in the days of Elijah ; saying, “ The Lord, He is the God ; the Lord, He is the God.” And this, again, will be followed up, to the dismay of the idol-worshippers, by such a shout as passed into the heavens from the dying voices of our holy confessors and faithful Reformers—that triumph-shout, I mean, of God’s true worshippers, which will not cease to the world’s end, “ THE BIBLE, the whole Bible, and NOTHING but the Bible, the RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.”

Is it become a question in these enlightened times—enlightened through the fires of burning Bibles—whether God is to be trusted or not ? whether it be wise or safe to act upon the counsels of those who make God a liar ?” or, whether a Bible-taught people, a country which is yet “ Protestant” in government, laws, civil institutions, and, above all, in the worship of Almighty God, can be justified in providing, or even in thinking about providing, out of the public expense, pensions, or preferments, or endowments, for a church which, in the person of its priests, can intrude into an Englishman’s home—can forcibly snatch from the hand of his child the New Testament Scriptures of her adorable Lord and Saviour—can dash them furiously into the flames, and malignantly keep them fast, amid the blazing embers, under the pressure of a walking stick, until the book, with all its blessed and saving contents, has been consumed out of sight and reduced to ashes ? Then, turning from these priestly doings—this spectacle of Bible-burning—this “ labour of love” for the soul’s health—this *Aaron-like* act, to “ stand between the dead and the living, and to stay the

plague" (Numbers xvi. 49)—what BIBLE-SUBSTITUTES, we may ask, is that Bible-burning priest, "in the bowels of his compassion," disposed to bestow on the Englishman's child in lieu of her destroyed Testament, in which she had found this precious record, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?" The priest himself provokes us to make inquiry into these more valuable helps to heaven, which, in the plenitude of his discretion, and in "the power of the keys" handed him by St. Peter, he is minded to give that artless child, upon certain considerations, and in preference to the Scriptures, which her school teacher and the Spirit of God had been leading her to learn and love.

The priest will choose her a *rosary*, "in honour," as he tells her, "of THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN;" whom, as "the holy Virgin of virgins"—as the immaculate and ever blessed "mother of God"—she may confidently supplicate to "have mercy on her." Or he will procure her a *crucifix* blessed by the Pope; and so fill her expanding mind with veneration and trust in a glittering gew-gaw, which the saving faith and the knowledge of the CRUCIFIED should have otherwise occupied. Or he will provide her with a *scapular*, or *badge*, of some of the countless confraternities; which, when paid for to the last farthing, according to the rules of the order and rates of subscription, shall secure to her either the prayers of departed saints, or a certain range of indulgences in some favourite sin, or masses "to shorten her sufferings in the fires" (as he tells her comfortably over the Bible fire)—"THE UNAVOIDABLE FIRES OF PURGATORY." Or, he will judiciously extract, from the inexhaustible resources of Papal lore, the *legend* of some convent nun, or canonized woman; who will take the little girl under her especial protection, and will, in due time, make over to her a portion of her "*works of supererogation*," such as shall prevail mightily for her soul "before God, and His holy apostles Peter and Paul." Or, the loss of the child's Testament may be replaced by a present to her, at some especially holy season, and in particular reference to her guardian angel, in the shape of some relic of a saint admitted into the calendar by one of the last "VICARS OF GOD." The adoration of so sacred a thing, however, will needs be observed most piously and punctually. Various "acts of faith" are to be performed with it; penances also, according to fixed order, and at regularly stated times; nor can there be any omission of the number of "*Aves*" and "*Pater-nosters*," which will be explained and arranged in THE CONFESSIONAL. The relic, so divinely and mysteriously influenced, will save the unconscious young creature, (as her new teacher asserts,) from the power of "evil spirits"—from attacks of "falling sickness"—from the danger of dying in childbirth—or, (as a blessing exceeding all others,) "from relapse into the damnable sin of heresy."

Some of my hearers may, as yet, be in happy ignorance of "THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY," and its workings, in this fashion, to ensnare the unwary. An extract, therefore, shall be produced from a Roman Catholic detail of "FIVE CANONIZATIONS," or *saint-makings*, which took place in the year 1839. The case of ST. VERONICA GUILLIANI will evidence the *impostures* which can be fabricated in lieu of Christ's most holy faith, and as Bible substitutes, in the absence, or prohibition, or destruction by fire, of those "*revealed things*, which belong unto us and to our children for ever."

"The saint Veronica," her biographers tell us, "was born at Marcatello, in the States of the Church, on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, 1660. Her

future sanctity was foreshadowed in her infancy. At six months old, seeing a picture representing the Holy Trinity, she left her mother's arms of her own accord, and, without any assistance, walked to it, and, with many signs of reverence, remained as if enchanted before it. At eighteen months old, seeing a shopkeeper use a false measure, her tongue was loosed, and she cried out in a clear voice, 'Act fairly, for God sees you.' At four years old, *the viaticum* being brought to her mother on her death-bed, she earnestly begged to receive the sacrament; and, when the priest refused, she argued the point with him, saying that he might safely break off a portion from the part intended for her mother, as Jesus is present in the smallest fragment of it. About the same time, she gave both her shoes to a begging pilgrim. One of the shoes stuck fast on the arch over the doorway, on which the pilgrim rose to more than human height to reach it; and our Lady appeared soon after, with the shoes in her hand, shining with rich jewels, and told her that *she* was the pilgrim, and that Christ had adorned them in that manner. When she grew up, notwithstanding the opposition of men and Satan, she became a *NUN*. In the monastery she filled every office in an exemplary manner; and, while she was the housekeeper, the cheese, eggs, and fish were miraculously multiplied.

"On Saint Augustine's day she saw our Saviour in glory; and St. Augustine presented her with a chalice, which he said was given to her by Almighty God. The liquor immediately boiled over, and was collected by angels in golden vessels; and it was explained to her that the liquor was *her* torments for the love of God, and the golden vessels expressed their value."

Not to run through the whole of so fulsome and childish a narrative, I pass on to a specimen of blasphemy, of which it might be doubted whether Rome herself could have dared to authenticate the statement, so recently, and under the blaze of Gospel light, A.D. 1839, namely—

"The biographer of St. Veronica affirms, that "God gave her to know, *ab extra*, that He wished to be espoused to her. In inviting her to His marriage, Jesus frequently appeared to her as a beautiful infant; and on one occasion showed her a beautiful jewel fixed in the wound of His side, which He told her was formed of her sufferings. On the feast of the Annunciation, our Lady prepared her for her marriage by an intellectual vision, in which she saw the great Queen of Angels enthroned. In answer to the prayer of St. Catharine of Sienna, and St. Rosa of Lima, that she would consent to her espousals with her Divine Son, our Lady sweetly replied, that 'they should be brought about.' On the 10th of April, 1694, our Lord appeared to her, and showing her the nuptial ring, invited her to the marriage, next day.

"When the day arrived, as she approached the altar, she heard the angels singing, '*Veni, sponsa Christi.*' She beheld our Lord sitting on a gold throne, and our Lady on an alabaster one St. Catharine and St. Rosa conducted Veronica to the foot of the thrones, and put upon her splendid robes over her usual religious habit. Our Lord had a beautiful gem in each of His wounds; in that in His side was the marriage ring. Our Lord uttered the words, '*Veni, sponsa,*' which the whole court took up. Our Lord made a sign to His mother; upon which the nuptial garment, a magnificent mantle covered with gems, and of different colours, was substituted for Veronica's previous habiliments. At last, the heavenly Queen commanded her to stretch out her hand to St. Catharine, which Jesus took, and, together with Mary ever

blessed, placed the ring on her finger, and blessed it. Thus ended the mystic ceremony of her espousal. Two years later, 1696, her loving Spouse rewarded her love and constancy by a wound which He made in her heart. In the holy Infant's hand she seemed to see a golden rod tipped with fire; He placed the opposite end against His own heart, and the point against hers, which was pierced through and through."

But enough of the sainted and God-espoused Veronica! It may be fancied to what an extent the imagination and feelings of a confiding, susceptible girl might be wrought upon through details thus glowing and circumstantial. So close an affinity to the Lord of All, would certainly recommend the sainted partaker of it as a patroness, indeed, whose suit for her suppliants could not be denied. And yet, the nakedness of the indecent figment might expose it, even to a child's mind, as blasphemous and revolting in the highest degree. Perversion to saint-worship can have little to boast of, which takes its origin from such damnable deceptions. But who, even of babes and of sucklings, that, "through the hearing of the ear," may have known anything rightly of "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent," would not shrink, as from the sting of the serpent, from misrepresentations of our most holy Creator so carnally pictured? Who that lives within the light of the Gospel, (not **THAT** which is kindled to *burn it*; but **THAT** which it kindles for the "*fire of love*,") would not feel horror of a superstition which holds out the Divine Majesty to be "altogether such an one as ourselves;" and also sets forth heaven, "the habitation of His holiness and glory," as in no respect differing from a Mohammedan paradise?

It is an undeniable tenet of the Roman Catholic faith, that the Virgin Mary is to be honoured with Divine worship. Yet to see, in its religious formularies, the exceedingly large provision made for that worship, you could scarcely doubt that the worship paid to the Virgin outpasses, in degree and intensity, that which is addressed to the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity. Hence such titles as you have just now heard—"Queen of Heaven"—"Queen of Angels"—"Mother of God," &c. Hence, also, that invocation (which may speak for itself) from her earnest adorers, "Mother, as by a mother's right, command thy Son!" It may not, however, be so generally known, that "the seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15) is referred exclusively, by the Romish Church, to the Virgin Mary. Upon this point, I would relate a fact which took place some months ago. A Roman Catholic peasant was discussing this doctrine with one of his priests, who laboured long and hard to convince his disputant that, whether the passage was applied to Christ or to the Virgin Mary, it was all the same. "Is it indeed, Sir?" said the man. "Do you mean to tell me, in sober earnest, that it is all the same whether we teach the child that the *man* or his *mother* does such and such a thing?" "Yes," said the priest, "I do; for, if the mother does it, she does it by her Son." The peasant replied, "If this be so, I find that I have been very ignorant, up to this time, upon a point of history connected with the affairs of my country. All my life, I have been under the impression that the Duke of Wellington gained the battle of Waterloo; and it seems it may turn out, after all, that the great victory is not to be attributed to the old 'Iron Duke,' but to his mother, the poor old Countess of Mornington, who has long been dead and buried." If honesty of mind like this, and the reasonings of common sense, were oftener interposed between priestly dictation and its dupes, the tone and tyranny of

the system would relax, and Papacy might be left to recruit its diminished ranks from unsuspecting childhood, from plastic credulity, from hoodwinked ignorance, and trembling superstition.

We have alluded to the prominence given to the Virgin Mary's worship, in the books of Roman Catholic devotion. Many of them seem to have no other object than to enlist the devout into her service, and to enforce the adoration of her name by the most binding vows. Her "Psalter," her "Rosary," her "Salutation," occupy a conspicuous and leading part in every priestly performance. We offer a few out of numerous instances.

"The piety of the Saint Joscio," we are told in the Saints' Calendar, "whilst he lived, was rewarded by a notable miracle at his death. No sooner was he dead, than there grew FIVE ROSES of extraordinary sweetness out of his head; two out of his eyes, two out of his ears, and one out of his mouth. Upon every one of them there was a letter of the Virgin Mary's name. • So that the whole M A R I A was composed out of them." What is the intent here, but to hold out encouragement to follow Joscio's example? The Virgin's favourites, if we credit this authority, are likely to fare the best. One case will show the effects of her patronage. "The Blessed Virgin," says the same authority, "came down to Saint Ida into her cell, with her *infant Jesus*. 'Behold,' says she, 'O Ida, thy Love! Take Him into thy lap, and satisfy thyself with the kisses and embraces of Him whom thou lovest.'"

We learn, further, from the Calendar, of St. Odilo's devoting himself to the Virgin Mary in these words: "O most holy Virgin and mother of the Saviour, of all ages! receive me, from this day forward, as your servant, and in all my cases, be my most merciful advocate. For, from this time, after God, I esteem nothing before thee; but, of my free will, I deliver myself for ever to be your possession, and to be your peculiar servant. Amen."

It is declared (for September 24) of St. Gerard, that "he dedicated a chapel to the honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, where he had set up her statue, and offered incense to her figure every day. He took care, also, by an ordinance which he made, that her altar should never be without fine odours burning upon it continually to her honour." And, in "The Contemplations of the Life and Glory of the blessed Virgin Mary," "I will ever observe thee as my sovereign Lady, adoptive and most powerful patroness, relying on thy bowels of mercy in all my wants, petitions, and tribulations of body and mind." Next follows the form of congregational worship, as it would seem, in these words:

"*Vers.* Open my lips, O mother of Jesus.

"*Resp.* And my soul shall speak forth thy praise.

"*V.* Divine Lady, be intent to my aid.

"*R.* Graciously make haste to help me.

"*V.* Glory to Jesus and Mary.

"*R.* As it was, is, and ever shall be."

The extent to which Roman Catholic worshippers rely upon the mediation of saints, may be ascertained from their Breviary:

"O blessed John the Baptist! reach out thy hand to us, and be to us continually a holy intercessor to the clemency of the Most High Judge; that, through thy merits, we may deserve to be freed from all tribulation."

"Mercifully accept, O God, our offerings which we have made unto Thee,

for the sake of the passion of thy blessed martyrs Saturninus and Sisinnius ; that, by their intercession, they may be made acceptable to Thy Majesty."

Mornay de la Messe furnishes an expression of prayer which we shudder in transcribing : " By the blood of Thomas à Becket, which he shed for Thee, make us to ascend to heaven, whither he is gone !"

What blasphemy and usurpation of the offices and prerogatives of the " ONE MEDIATOR between God and man !" The Bible gives the lie to such " doctrines of devils ;" it can find no favour, therefore, in the eyes of the priests of Rome. They put it out of the way, that they may fortify themselves and their inventions on more convenient authorities. " The saints," as ordained at the Council of Trent, " help us by their own merits ; and are, therefore, invoked and worshipped, the rather because they both pray continually for the salvation of men, and also because God bestows many benefits upon us by their merits and favour."

But is the Church of Rome quite clear upon the subject of all these departed spirits being safe in heaven ? Suppose that some of them are yet in purgatory ; what interest, then, can they exercise above for their unconscious clients here below ? When, and where, and how, in this present lying world, can it be certainly made out that the suppliants of the dead, in the petitions which they so earnestly offer, and in the intercessions upon which they trust so implicitly, may not, in the end, turn out to be of as little avail as the " flattery" which " soothes" not " the dull, cold ear of death ?" What Prætorius tells us, may well shake the confidence of saint-worshippers, and is, at least, unlikely to enlist many Protestant Christians into " that troop." " Herman, the author of the heresy of Fraticelli, was," as we are informed, " honoured *as a saint for twenty years* together ; and then, his body was taken up and BURN'T FOR A HERETIC." When, then, we repeat, will a case which is so equivocal even with the doctors of the Vatican itself, be made sufficiently convincing to the worshippers of the one and only true God through the one and only Mediator ?

In the meantime, are you, my Protestant hearers, ready to surrender your Bibles at the word of a fellow-mortal, and to withdraw your children from " the nurture and admonition of the Lord," in order that they may bear their part in the ceremonials of saint worship, and be placed under the tutelage of some " Rosa," or " Catharine," or " Veronica ?" Would an exchange like this, think you, be to their advantage in either worlds ? Would the choice be wise or safe for yourselves or your households ? Would it in anywise be answerable to the Divine precept (Isaiah xxxiv. 16), " seek ye out of the Book of the Lord, and read ?" How justly would our dear Saviour's reproof (Matt. vii. 9), apply to such heartless and ungodly parents !—" What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?" These, and such like questions, will receive their appropriate answers—while, at the same time, the burning, in bitter wrath, of " the Lamb's Book of life," will be convincingly tested, through a short examination of the Book itself.

Whence, then, is the Bible ? Any of our school-children present will reply, and can render the proof—that it is come to us from our all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful Lord God ; that it is a copy of His infinite mind—the expression of His most gracious and sovereign will—the revelation of His eternal love to man, whom He formed in His own likeness, whom He hath set over the

works of His hands, and from whose nature He had prepared a body in order to the "great mystery of godliness," namely, the incarnation of His Divinity in the person of His "only-begotten, coequal, and well-beloved Son." In this way hath come to us the gift of life and peace in the Gospel—of which the priests of Rome are purposed to despoil us, notwithstanding, and in despite of, all the intrinsic evidence which the ill-used Book exhibits to even him that "runs and reads," that in it, through Christ, are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" that all herein contained "is given by inspiration of God;" that "the prophecy" which, in old time, hath thus come down to us, "was not by the will of man," (man seems as unwilling about it *now* as of old,) "but," as it is added, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In what true grandeur and plainness of speech doth the Gospel unfold this mystery! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The apostle Peter says to the same effect, (Acts x. 36,) explaining the common nature and intention of the old and New Testament, "the Word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all :) that Word, I say, you know." Zacharias, "filled with the Holy Ghost," (Luke i. 67,) "blessed the Lord God of Israel because of His having spoken" (verse 70) "by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began." Our gracious Redeemer declares, (John vi. 63,) "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life;" and again, (John viii. 26,) "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him, the Father." What, then, are we to conclude of that system, or of those persons who dare to destroy the contents of the Bible—who forbid, who interrupt, and prevent to the uttermost the circulation, the perusal, and the knowledge of its saving truths? Surely, they do all that in them lies to blot out from the creation of God the Divine purpose of mercy—the record of eternal life which God hath given in His Son and the wondrous effects of that love "stronger than death" wherewith God "loved the world." It is equally clear that the priests of the church of Rome have, in one point at least, gone a step farther than the teachers of religion among the Jews—upon whose practises the high indignation of embodied Truth had fallen with so much severity. (See in Luke xi. from verse 39.) The latter had "taken away the key of knowledge" (verse 52) which was bad enough. The former proceed to set fire to all the apartments where any portion of the precious treasure is deposited. If the ban of extreme malediction rested upon the stealth in the one case; who may define the measures of that Almighty woe which is reserved for the impenitent guilty in the other case! Let Bible burners, and Bible neglecters also, consider timely, how they will answer it—for "rejecting the counsel of God" against their own souls and those of others!

See, I beseech you, how the saving provisions of this book are applicable at one and the same moment, to every condition and circumstance of every child of man! It makes known the ways of God; brings life and immortality to light; gives the knowledge of salvation for the forgiveness of sins; heals the broken-hearted; opens the prison doors to them that are bound; releases those who were led captive by Satan after his will; renews our fallen nature; implants the Divine likeness; fills the penitent heart with joy and peace in believing; sets up the kingdom of heaven amongst men; establishes the reign of grace—of Christ—and of holiness in the midst of a fallen and

condemned world ; and so makes ready a people prepared for the Lord. Are these befitting grounds on which the fires of extermination should be kindled against the Bible ?

The enquiry will lead us into a few particulars which go down to the very roots of our eternal hopes and best interests. They therefore deserve our most prayerful and patient consideration. The origin of this revelation, as we have seen, is altogether divine ; a point which, of itself alone, should have settled for ever any further controversy. There are other questions, however, by the examination of which we may the more thoroughly be “persuaded in our own minds,” and also “be ready to give to any that ask a reason for the hope that is in us.”

For whom is the Bible revealed ? The text will make answer. “Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever ; that we may do all the words of this law.” What defence can be urged against this argument by the Bible-exterminator ? If his cause be just—and he himself be left to run through the property as quickly as his purpose imports ; where, I would ask, are we to seek the knowledge of the Holy One ; the joys and rewards of faithful obedience ; the homage and duty which we owe to our immortal Head ; the rule and directory of that bounden duty and service ? Consider these things ; and then say, will you surrender up to a pretender—to a usurper—to a fictitious claimant—so rich an inheritance which “belongs” to you, as by Divine right ? Will you not take and keep possession of it ; seeing that, the All-bountiful God has not only revealed it and published it in your own name and title : but hath also made it over to yourself and your offspring ? If the Lord of all have thus adopted you—have placed you, of His own free-will, in a state of heirship—have transferred to you, of that which is His, beyond the power or a question of alienation ; where is the priest, the prelate, or the creature of dust, that can dare to interpose between yourself as the proprietor—and the full, entire, and unrestricted use of a possession—so lawfully yours ?

Salvation, as it is revealed in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, belongs unto you and to your children for ever, if you will but make the claim. It is needful to your soul's health. It is ruinous to your hopes of happiness if you remain in ignorance and unconcern about it. Acquaint yourself rather with the Word of the living God for your good always. All that is contained herein is for your learning. It is the penmanship of “the Holy Ghost, the Comforter”—through the agency of prophets, evangelists, and apostles. Are you commanded by Almighty God to “Search the Scriptures ?”—and who among the children of men is competent to hinder you ? “These words”—saith the Lord (Deut. vi. 6)—“which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children : and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Is acquaintance with *the moral law* enforced by its Divine Author with most minute detail ? Is the observance of every, the least tittle, which had been prescribed in that older dispensation, required—and unflinching, unceasing obedience always, everywhere, and through all the relations of life ; and, of all without exception who were admitted into the bond of that

covenant? And shall we (think you?) be free from bloodguiltiness—if when brought, through distinguishing grace, under the bond of “a better covenant” and made “partakers of the heavenly calling,” we should deliberately forfeit its provisions and privileges as “the perfect law of liberty?” Are we to bow down before creature authorities, when infinite Wisdom vouchsafes to be our Counsellor? Are we to “confer with flesh and blood” in a matter between our souls and our God and where disobedience is to be followed by everlasting burnings? No: “He that made us would show us no favour”—if, in the balancing of the parties, we should love even father or mother more than He” (Matthew x. 37.) Away then with man or angel or devil—should their influence be directed against the Scriptures of our God, and our hopes of eternal life treasured within them. “Though we,” writes the inspired apostle (Galatians i. 8.), “or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!”

On such high and holy ground we plant our footsteps, and place our protest against mortal domination, against priestly intolerance, against Satan’s malice. We say, in the face of the universe, that we will not suffer ourselves or our children to be deprived of “those things which are revealed,” which “belong unto us and to them”—as conferred by our heavenly Father. We will not allow, at least without a struggle, “the purchased possession” to be wrenched from us by bigot hands. While England is the land of freedom we will not suffer the persecuting spirit of Rome, unresistingly,—to seize our Bibles—and, to fling them to the flames—as they were wont to do with the precious lives of our martyred forefathers. We trust that, in the recurrence of such a crisis which we have but too much cause to anticipate, persons not a few will be found willing “not to love even their lives unto death” so that they may overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

When we hear of Bible burning at Birmingham, we are not to suppose, as most people are apt to do—who esteem all religions alike, that “the priest meant nothing particular” by it and that it is only “a singular instance.” Such doings are by no means of rare occurrence, although they fall not under the public gaze. In Roman Catholic countries they dare not possess our Bible—so, they have none to burn. But in the popish parts of Ireland, where the existence of protestant families is yet endured, this priestly pastime is a thing so common as scarcely to excite notice. To elucidate these observations I submit the following instances.

The Rev. H. Seymour in his *pilgrimage to Rome* says—“I visited in person every shop; and in every shop I was informed that they had no copy of the Holy Scriptures in the language of the people. I asked on every occasion why they did not possess so important a book; and on every occasion they replied, ‘*non e permesso*’ (it is not permitted); or ‘*E proibito*’ (it is prohibited). The result was the fullest confirmation of the statement which was made to me; for I could not obtain a portable copy in the establishment of any bookseller in Rome.”

The Kerry Evening Post reports a case of Bible-burning on a large scale which was held at New Market, in the County of Cork, on Sunday evening, March 25, 1848.

“A man who is employed as teacher of the Irish Scriptures imprudently went into a public house kept by a man named Sullivan, brother to one of the priests of this place. While the Irish teacher and some others were drinking

a few tumblers of porter, a discussion on some religious subject induced him to produce his Bible; from which he expected to prove his argument. But the Romanists provoked by the introduction of the Word of God, forcibly took it from him; carried it into the street; and publicly set fire to the book of God. Two pious women begged of the men not to burn the book which informed them of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ for them and all mankind. The priest's brother cried out—'*don't give it up—burn it—burn it.*' The importunity of the good women prevailed. The men desisted. But in a few minutes after, the priest returned from Rosary. The priest made the men produce the Bible—took it into his brother's house—and had it consumed in the flames, in the presence of scores of rejoicing spectators. A very respectable aged lady remonstrated; and the priest by a most violent push threw her on the face on the pavement; where she lay for a considerable time unable to rise until lifted. She was seriously injured. A little orphan girl expressed her disapprobation of the priest's conduct in throwing down and hurting the old lady; for which she was repulsed by '*his Reverence*' with severe blows of his umbrella.

"On Monday the same priest went among his friends in the town, soliciting materials for a more extensive burning of Bibles that evening. Tar barrels, tow steeped in tar, and tar in which the Bibles were saturated to make them easily ignite being procured—a large fire was lit up, at about seven o'clock p. m. Twenty-two Bibles were thrown into the flames, surrounded by hundreds of rejoicing spectators who, with clubs, threw the flaming Bibles into the air; and as they fell, beat them back into the flames; shouting—'*we will beat and burn the life out of them.*' Part of the town appeared illuminated as if in commemoration of some great national victory: and while the crowd clapped, cheered, and danced round the portentous fire—the venerable priest at his brother's window, which was lit with seven or eight candles, sat with his decanter and glass drinking his response in '*merry glee.*'

"When the Bibles were consumed, balls of fire were thrown on the roofs and into the houses of some Protestants; and cries of *£20 for the head of a Protestant or Orangeman.* The scene was awful beyond description; and as strange to say—not the least attempt was made by the police to restore order.

"On the following day (Tuesday) some more Bibles were obtained. A fresh fire was struck up opposite the market-house, in which Mr. Maguire, one of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries was preaching to a large and respectable congregation; who appeared unusually thankful for an opportunity of hearing the soul-reviving truths of that book, which had been committed to the flames on the two preceding evenings. Voices from the crowd were heard shouting—'*We'll give them more light.*' The preacher, after finishing his discourse and singing a verse of praise to God, called on his congregation to unite in prayer to a merciful God in behalf of those persons who were the enemies of the Word of life. It was a truly solemn time.

"When the congregation was retiring, one man held up a flaming Bible. Another was flung blazing into the air, and fell on an adjoining house; while, in the crowd was seen a number of persons called respectable shopkeepers—kicking the book of the law of the Lord in and out of the flames. Fiendish yells of—'*the Bibles are burnt, the Bibles are burnt*' rent the heavens. It was a scene calculated to penetrate the most obdurate heart. When the devotees of holy mother church had finished their work of burning; they carried a tar

barrel on a cart through the town to the gentleman's place where the missionary slept and honoured him with a few cheers."

In this view of Popery presented by its proceedings—may we not say, with Bishop Sherlock, that, "to design its advancement is to design the ruin of the State and the destruction of the church; that, it is to sacrifice the nation to a double slavery; to prepare chains for their bodies and their minds?" As to the duty which we owe to our children in order to save them from so baneful an influence—the counsel of Martin Luther may not be unseasonable: "I would not advise any man," said that deep thinker, "to place his child where the Scriptures are not regarded as the Word of life. Every institution, where God's Word is not diligently studied, must become corrupt." "If you would know God's mind," writes another witness, "search His Word, watch His hand, live at His throne. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

Were we to examine, further, into the effects which a faithful acquaintance with the holy Bible is wont to produce; the utter nothingness of Bible-substitutes forged by human skill or presumption would be quickly detected. The first statement which should present itself would determine Protestant Christians to save, at whatever cost or loss, this invaluable treasury of Divine wisdom from being burnt out of sight and destroyed from the habitations of men.

ONE EXPRESSION, which bears affecting application to "the everlasting Son of the Father," might suffice to reconcile any unprovoked hate against the Bible; and to quench any fires which the feeble malice of its adversaries might have kindled against it. The expression is that of acquiescence in the purpose of man's redemption:—"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: * * * then said I, lo I come, (*in the volume of the Book it is written of Me*) to do Thy will, O God."—(Hebrews x. 5, 7). ONE PETITION in the intercessory prayer (John xvii.), breathed, for His much loved church, by the same eternal Mediator, at the moment when He was about to pour out His soul unto death for us, might prevail—one would think—even with His murderers, to spare the document for the petition's sake, from sacrilegious disgrace and insult. The petition—(and we envy not its repudiators)—runs thus in the seventeenth verse—"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth." ONE CLOSING ACT of the office which He took upon Him for man's deliverance—ere yet He had ascended up on high—might have pleaded in mitigation of Bible burning. The act I allude to is recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke, and the twenty-seventh verse, in these words—"Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself:" and, as though He would endear and ratify to His followers for ever a "stedfast continuance in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship," we read in the forty-fifth verse—"then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

Add to all this, the PROVEN and admitted fact, that, nothing which is good has ever been effected, either in the heart of man or the world at large, except through the instrumentality of the knowledge, the spread, and the influence of "the Word of our God, which liveth and abideth for ever." By it, as "of incorruptible seed," are redeemed souls "born again," (1 Peter i. 23), into the grace, and kingdom, and patience of Jesus. By it, as by "the word of reconciliation committed unto us," (2 Cor. v. 19), "those who were afar off," are brought into union and "fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ."

By it, as "the sword of the Spirit," (Ephesians vi. 17) are we empowered and commanded to resist the devil, to overcome the world, and to "fight the good fight of faith." In one Scripture—(Ephesians v. 25)—which comprises the meaning of many others—our Divine Head and Bridegroom, as it is written, loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it." And by what means?—namely, "with the washing of water by the Word"—(verse 26).

If such, then, be the blessed effects which follow a prayerful and obedient reception of the Bible; how should we glorify the Father of mercies—how should our "spirit rejoice in God our Saviour"—that such "things are revealed"—and that they "belong unto ourselves and to our children *for ever*, that we may do all the words of this law!" At the same time with what pity, with what forbearance, with what self-forgotten charity, should our hearts be moved towards the Roman Catholic portions of our fellow-countrymen; who are prohibited by anathema—are visited with excommunication from Christ and from hope, for "disobedience to the Church;" in either receiving, or possessing, or perusing, or even hearing, the authorised version of the Holy Scriptures. Priestly absolution, after extreme penance, exacted to the uttermost, is the only source of release from guilt of so deep a die!

It remains to inquire why the *priests* of Rome are so bitter *against* the Bible? The reason is—that, the Book is *AGAINST* the Romish *priesthood*. It is against their craft—their gain—their mummary—their merchandise—their lying wonders—their idolatrous practises. Here is the simple answer which can be borne out by most incontestible facts. As long as the epistle to the Romans, which treats of the way of a sinner's justification before God;—as long as the epistle to the Hebrews, which treats of priesthood and sacrifice, and abolishes the distinctions which Romanism loves to parade;—as long as the revelation of St John in Patmos, which exposes the MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN and of THE BEAST that carries her—continue to hold a place in the sacred canon:—so long will the *fourth rule* of "*the Congregation of the Index*" remain in full force—as it was enacted by the Council of Trent. In other words, the papal indictment against circulating the Holy Scriptures will not be relaxed:—the liberty of buying them or selling them in any Roman Catholic country may not be exercised:—and the victims of priestly bigotry will still be left to "perish for lack of knowledge"—until "the MAN OF SIN shall be destroyed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth."

The Romish church proclaims herself infallible. How far then and how fatally does she place herself beyond the hope or reach of correction! Alas! for such incurable pride where the whole system is diseased and out of course! At the roots—in the core—and through every one of her branches—she is all rottenness. As the prophet writes (Isaiah i. 5)—"the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." She confers upon a dying mortal—entitled the Pope—the divine honors of the eternal Godhead. How self-imposed, then, "*on her seven heads is the name of blasphemy!*" She barter salvation for money. Instead of teaching men to "repent and to turn from the evil of their ways"—she undertakes to dispense indulgences for any sin which her customers may see fit to contract for. She prostrates her understanding and reason under the foot of a priest; and then makes that priest to be, in his own person, THE MAKER OF THE GOD whom

she pretends to worship. She receives payment, in silver and gold and legacies, for releasing suffering souls out of the fires of purgatory. Yet, gifted as she assumes to be—with such infinite power in the unseen world—she can act so *usurious* and *merciless* a part as to prolong the fiery torments of her children; if the stipulated sums for the needful *masses* be not discharged in full tale. She consecrates dead mens' bones, and man-made idols, and merits which have no existence except in self-esteem: and so she manufactures and musters together a host of saints, both male and female, whom she inserts—in most blasphemous partnership—with the mediatorship and pre-eminence of our only Saviour God, “over all, blessed for ever!” An instance has been exemplified in St. Veronica which betrays, in a high degree, the hardihood in superstition to which papal Rome can attain. Another accredited fact will show my astonished hearers that “letters from heaven” can be received by the faithful! And who, at least among Romanists, would not regard such letters as fitting substitutes for Bibles, fit only for burning?

The *Estafette* of Paris, under the head of *Grenoble*, (dated August 24, 1848) reports as follows:—

“Last Sunday a certain mountebank was selling, on the public square, for *two sous*, the miraculous prayers and letters found at Jerusalem in the holy sepulchre, and written by the hand of Jesus Christ. We had the curiosity to procure one of these documents. Here we find that those, who do not believe in them, will be struck with maledictions, they and their children; that, their cattle will be accursed; and that, they themselves will have plagues, famine, and great sickness. On the other hand, whoever will carry upon him the precious relics, will not die a sudden death; will not be attacked by plague; will not die by fire. Much more, he will see ‘Our lady of good succour’ (Notre-dame-de-Bons-Secours) three hours before his death. The concourse was immense around the seller of miracles. We saw elderly ladies and venerable gentlemen approaching, and religiously giving their two sous in exchange for the paper, which was to preserve them from so many evils, and to bring upon their heads such a deluge of Divine benedictions.”

“The paper is headed—‘LETTER SENT FROM HEAVEN;’ and purports to be ‘a copy found at the Bastille by a deaf and dumb child ten years of age.’ It runs in these words: ‘Long live Jesus! Long live Mary! Long live Joseph, the sent of God! Praise and worship Jesus Christ at the very holy sacrament of the altar. I write to you on Sunday; and, by frequenting divine worship, by helping the poor, and by following your trade—you will be blessed by Me. I worked six days at the creation of the world; and on the seventh day I rested—explain this to your children and servants. You will be crowned by My benedictions; you will hinder the plague. The famine will come to mark My anger. You shall fast *five fridays*.. You shall say *five paters* and *five aves* in honour of the death I suffered for your salvation. I announce to you signs in the stars, great earthquakes and great fears. For you—you shall lend this letter to all who demand it; and to all who would doubt this truth. My arm will weigh heavily (*s'appesantira*) upon those, who will keep it without publishing it; they shall be cursed of Me from heaven. Those who shall ask for a copy of it shall be blessed of Me; even when they have sins as numerous as the stars in the firmament, by means of a deep grief and a hatred of sin.’”

“Conclusion of the letter of gold. Good luck to those who shall keep it. They shall never be smitten by the things which might happen to them.

When a woman is in childbirth, and shall take this letter sent by the very high God; you shall apply it. Believe this letter. Blessing will be given to you all. So be it! Do not keep this letter without publishing it." The deaf and dumb child, it appears, who found the letter, was at once healed. A minister of the truth of God might be covered with shame for degrading the pulpit with such old wives' fables! "But is there not now a cause?" Has not the gage of defiance been thrown into the midst of us? When Bible burning flings up its offences against high heaven, shall not the fictions and fabrications, which are proffered as Bible substitutes, be weighed and tested to the confusion of the assailants?

To conclude. The allwise Governor of the universe is unchangeably just. If England persist in her disastrous purpose of cherishing a false and idolatrous worship;—if the Irish portion of her subjects be encouraged to bow down before altars and crucifixes, and masses and images;—if the blessed Book of grace and of truth be denied to the people; if it is to be burnt with fanatic fury where it falls within the track of a priest—and no defending hand be interposed between him and his victim:—above all, if Bible-instructed Christians still turn a deaf ear to the warnings of sacred history—still close their eyes to the startling events of the day and impending judgments—disregardful of their religious blessings and national deliverances in times past:—then, indeed, may we expect to see our country, our church, our civil and sacred liberties sold into the hands of our enemies, or trampled in the mire by a persecuting priesthood. Nor shall we alone be sufferers. Our "little ones which have not known anything" will reap as we have sown. If the "things revealed *belong* unto us and to them;" and we be found despisers of our birth-right as profane Esau;—He, whose name is "Jealous," will, even as He hath forewarned us, proceed in just judgment to "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children"—until He leave us neither root nor branch; unless we repent us speedily and return to a better mind. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

A LIVING FAITH.

A Sermon,

BY THE RIGHT HON. AND MOST REV. THE

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

(Dr. JOHN BIRD SUMNER).

PREACHED IN ST. DUNSTON'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 18, 1849.

Before making a Collection on behalf of the Parochial School.

"As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." — James ii. 26.

THERE are two thoughts or feelings, somewhat different in themselves, which will be found united in the mind of every man who has fully imbibed the spirit of the Gospel. The first is, a sense of his unworthiness—of the meanness of his best works, the insufficiency of all his services to recommend him to the favour of God. Compared with what he ought to be, compared with what he might be, compared with the rule prescribed to him and the glory set before him, how lamentably cold is his heart! how grievously deficient his practice! "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" It is from an overflowing sense of this unworthiness, that St. Paul so constantly reminds his disciples of the truth—"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy hath God saved us;" "by grace are ye saved;" "not of works, lest any man should boast;" "eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ." This thought will be always present with the Christian; but so also will another thought, equally becoming his condition; I mean, a sense of the duty incumbent on him to whom so much mercy has been shown, that he "walk worthy" of the price by which he has been ransomed, "of the vocation to which he has been called"—that he "let his light shine before men"—that he prove himself "to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ"—that he labour to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," to "glorify God in his body and his spirit which are God's."

With a strong sense of the necessity of bringing Christians to this test of their faith, St. James, in the passage to which the text belongs, (indeed, throughout his whole epistle,) points out the way in which faith will certainly manifest itself, whenever it has possession of the heart. It will lead the man to be "a doer of the Word, and not a hearer only;" it will constrain him to "bridle his tongue," to be just and compassionate, to have respect unto "the brethren of low degree," to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

You will perceive at once, that in these two feelings there is nothing inconsistent; one is compatible with the other. And although a dread of trusting to our works, and a desire to "show our faith by our works," may exist together, and ought to exist together, in the heart of every Christian man, yet it is quite possible that two Christians, or even the same Christian, may speak in a

somewhat different tone, according as the one or other of these feelings may be at the time uppermost in his mind. 'God forbid,' will the dying Christian say, 'that I should look to my works to justify me before God; so much infirmity, so much deficiency has accompanied them all, that I should be without hope were it not for the assurance that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."' Such, indeed, will be his constant feeling; but it will appear most vivid then, when he looks with the nearest and the closest view towards the tribunal of God, before whom "all things are naked and open." Still, at another season, in the season which is given him to "make his calling and election sure," he will use a somewhat different tone, the result of another working of his mind. 'Can it be true,' he will say, 'that I have indeed an interest in Christ my Redeemer? Can so unprofitable a servant be really led by the Spirit? Can so barren a plant be indeed united to the true Vine? I must "work while it is called to-day." "What do I more than others?" What proof have I to show that I am created anew after God's own image?—what token of faith to allege, that He may receive me at last, and not assign me a place among the unworthy and unprofitable?' Thus to analyse the Christian's mind and refer to his experience, is an easy mode of interpreting some texts of Scripture, which appear at first sight, what it is impossible they should do, to contradict each other.

That idea has been entertained, for instance, concerning the passage of St. James which I have taken for our consideration. Because, St. Paul has said, describing the nature of the Gospel covenant—"being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ." That is, we are pardoned and accepted of God for the merits of Jesus Christ, in whom we believe and trust. "For by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified before God." No man's own goodness or deservings can prove him to be righteous in His sight by whom all words, and works, and thoughts are weighed. St. James, on the contrary, in words which seem to have a different tenour, shows how "by works is a man justified, and not by faith only." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." 'Therefore,' say some, 'St. James wrote to correct, or at least to explain St. Paul, who does not mean that we are saved by faith alone. Our works are imperfect, through our feeble nature; we must do the best we can, and believe on the revelation of the Lord Jesus, and our faith and our works together will render us acceptable to God.' Such has been the error of some; while others put their doctrine into a more plausible shape. 'Faith in Christ,' they say, 'brings us into reconciliation with God, and places us in a condition to "work out our own salvation;" we are first justified here on earth by faith—we shall be justified at the great day of account by the works which, as believers in Christ, we have performed.'

Now, my brethren, if this were a mere critical inquiry, it would be very little suited to this place or this occasion. But it is a subject of vital importance; it is a question on which much depends—I may say, on which all depends; our peace certainly depends on it, and perhaps our final safety. "That we are counted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," is truly affirmed by our Church to be "a most wholesome doctrine." It is the only doctrine which produces a healthy state of mind, or a course of practice suited to the high calling of the Christian. And there is no need to contradict this great truth, no need to undermine this pillar of our reformed faith, in order to reconcile texts of Scripture which are alike written by the inspiration of God—texts which, instead of leading to

opposite conclusions, do really harmonize together, and agree in establishing the same great and all-important doctrine. There cannot be two ways of salvation; there is only one "name given under heaven, whereby we may be saved." Neither can there be two modes of justification, one by faith and the other by works. This has been often alleged, sometimes openly and sometimes virtually and by implication, but it never approved itself to be a "doctrine according to godliness," never was shown by its effects to be "the wisdom of God and the power of God." But though there are not two ways of salvation, or two methods by which man can be brought into reconciliation with his Maker, there are different ways of believing—there are different ways of receiving God's Word; and if we examine this, we shall find that St. James is speaking of one sort of faith, one way in which the Word of God is received, which is inoperative and ineffectual, and that St. Paul is speaking of that sound and vital and influential faith, which is generated and nourished by the Spirit, which unites the soul to Christ, which "works by love," which "overcomes the world," and will at last carry the believer safe to the kingdom prepared for the righteous.

There are some, indeed, who deny that there is, or can be any faith without a corresponding life. 'No one,' they say, 'can believe the Gospel to be a revelation from God, without being influenced by the Gospel.' Now, brethren, is this a mere dispute about a word, or is it ignorance of the heart of man? Are there not those who see it to be as certain that Jesus lived and died, as that Cæsar lived and died, or any other person recorded in history, and yet think no more of Jesus than they think of Cæsar? Are there not multitudes who believe in Jesus just as the Arabians believe in Mahomet? They belong to a Christian country; therefore they profess Christianity. Perhaps they are jealous for its forms, attend its ordinances; but it never regulates their lives or sentiments. They avow its creeds; but their thoughts, words and works are directed by a very different standard. Further still, there may be a speculative or philosophical faith, acknowledging the fitness of the Gospel to the condition of mankind, avowing the excellence of its precepts, but never reaching the heart or going beyond the understanding. There may be—alas! is it not too often proved that there is?—the weak faith, which is overpowered by the cares or pleasures of this life, and brings no fruit to perfection; there may be the unsteady faith of such as "receive the Word with joy, but in time of temptation fall away." Once more, there is the acknowledged error of the Antinomian, who releases himself from the obligations of the moral law, and while he relies on Jesus as a Saviour, permits another law to have dominion over him.

Now it does not seem reasonable to affirm of all these characters, that they disbelieve the Word of God, because we see that their belief in that Word has no effect upon their lives. He that is an unbeliever maintains that the Gospel is a "cunningly devised fable;" but these of whom I have been speaking would indignantly repel any such insinuation. Some have even defended Christianity as a Divine revelation, while they have understood little of its most important doctrines; others have risked their lives in its cause, though their practice has never been governed by its truths; and in the course of more frequent and common experience, multitudes give proof, abundant proof, that they have been inwardly believing the Gospel to be true, though they have never been professing or obeying it in their lives—for, when death approaches, and tears from off their eyes the deceitful veil of this present world, they summon the minister of Christ, and seek for comfort in the remembrance of the redemption which He hath wrought, and claim to partake

in the memorials of His love and mercy. As much as to acknowledge—**‘Full well have we known, that He whom we have been neglecting all our days was indeed the Son of God!’** Alas ! let none deceive themselves ; **“God is not mocked,”** and **“whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap ;”** **“not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.”** We are obliged, both by reason and by Scripture, to declare concerning these historical, these national, these speculative, these barren and inconsistent believers, that they have not such faith as receives Jesus Christ in the way to which God has annexed eternal life—which takes Him as all in all—which accepts Him in all the glory of His person, in all the perfection of his offices, in all the fulness of His power—which relies on Him as Redeemer, which clings to Him as Mediator, which is obedient to Him as Lord.

Now it was to produce such disciples, such followers, such subjects as these, that Christ Jesus came into the world. Nothing can be more plainly declared. He **“gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”** For these He purchased the heavenly kingdom, and these He is preparing to possess it. **“Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,”** they **“live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world ;”** looking for the blessed hope of His second appearance in glory. And these He will acknowledge as His own. He did not suffer the penalty of sin, that men might continue sinners in defiance of His cross ; He did not **“give His life a ransom”** to purchase heaven for those whose character was not made suitable for heaven. If there be such, who yet profess to believe on Him, they have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God ; for the heirs of that kingdom are **“created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”** So, those who are united to Him by real and lively and Scriptural faith are **“renewed in the spirit of their mind,”** are cleansed from sin, are turned away from their iniquities, **“walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.”**

This is the character of what is described by an old, but expressive term, **“saving faith.”** It includes in it all those who receive Christ, on their part, as **“the way, the truth and the life,”** and to whom He, on His part, **“gives power to become the sons of God ; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** Other faith than this is vain, and profiteth nothing.

St. James illustrates this by a natural example. **‘What should we think,’** he asks, **‘of one who pretended to feel great affection for another, and to wish him all possible good, and yet took no care to promote that good, or even to relieve his wants ?’** **“If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body ; what doth it profit ?”** Who would value such a useless profession of love ? Who would think it deserving of any return ? **“Even so, faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.”** Believing that Jesus is the Son of God, yet not to imitate His character, not to follow His precepts, not to conform to His commands, is no more acceptable and profitable faith, than to speak kind words to a neighbour, and not assist his wants, is acceptable and satisfactory love. Suppose, therefore, a person to profess dependence on Christ Jesus—to profess, that is, that he knows the corruption of his heart, the infirmity of his faith, and consequently, that he trusts not to his own righteousness, but to the

atonement made on the cross for the unrighteous, the blood that was shed for the remission of sin ; supposing this, we say, these are excellent words, they represent the state of the Christian's mind : this was St. Paul's faith ; this was the faith which he desired that all should be clothed with, as the only robe by which sin can be effectually covered, or pardon effectually obtained. But still, St. James is aware how prone a man's heart is to deceive him ; and knowing this, he requires a proof of this dread of God's wrath, this hatred of sin, this love of Christ as delivering us from sin. 'Nay,' he argues—'nay, a man may say to such an one—"Thou hast faith ;" thou professest to believe in Christ ; I would not doubt your profession, or deny that your belief ; but examine yourself, prove your own soul ; let me witness a proof of your faith in your life and practice : how else can it be known ? "Shew me thy faith without thy works." Thou canst not ; it is impossible. Thou canst not shew it, except by works, for faith is hidden in the heart ; it cannot be seen of itself—it can be only judged of by its effects.' It is like the life which animates the body ; we cannot see it, we cannot tell what it depends on ; but this we know, if the principle of life be sound and healthy, the man will breathe with freedom and move with ease. So, if there be sound and acceptable faith, though it lie deep in the recesses of the heart, its existence there will be evident ; it will freely breathe, in piety towards God—it will actively work, in charity towards man.

Here, then, is the reason why St. James requires us to show our faith by our works ; because there can be no other proof of our having that faith at all, which will avail us in the sight of God. There may be a belief in Christ, which the mind cannot resist, because the evidence of the Christian revelation is too strong to be set aside ; there may be a belief in Christ which grows out of our birth and education, which we receive, like our language, from the country in which we are born ; more than this, there may be a belief in Christ strong enough to disturb our conscience, and yet, it is to be feared, "a savour of death," rather than life, because it is a body without a spirit. It is not strong enough to quicken the soul with a new and vital principle—not powerful enough to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts"—not powerful enough to raise the heart from things below to things above, so that it shall "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and "have its treasure in heaven." And all this is done, and must be done, by that faith which does justify a man in the sight of God—by that faith which receives Christ Jesus, as "made to us of God" (that is, as being to us through His councils,) "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Such faith rests, indeed, upon historical truth ; but it is much more than the belief of a historical fact ; such faith is much more than national, though it rejoices in knowing that God hath chosen the country to which we belong as one to which His saving truth should be made known ; such faith is not intellectual only, though it approves itself to the judgment of the renewed mind ; such faith is not dead or inactive, but lively and energetic ; it inspires laborious exertion ; it breathes in love to God and man ; it breaks forth in spiritual desires ; it refreshes itself by spiritual meditation ; it dreads what God's Word condemns—it approves what God's Word approves ; it contends against the indwelling principle of sin—it aspires after the perfection of holiness, complete participation of the Divine nature. In a word, it actuates the soul, as the vital principle actuates the body ; and if Satan could utterly overthrow it, (which, blessed be God, One greater than Satan forbids,) the whole man, altered and decayed, would prove that the former principle of life was gone.

And now, my brethren, I need not detain you long in applying what has

been said to the object which seeks your aid to-day. That charitable institution was established, trusting to the influential and vital faith, of which I have been speaking, which believes unto righteousness, which actuates labours of love, which enforces self-denial. As long as that faith prevails, so long will this charity find the support it needs; for he who is governed by such faith will compare himself and his life with his Saviour's precepts, and see how they agree. The cause is too serious—one in which too many are mistaken—not to be brought to a clear and decisive proof. "The heart is deceitful above all things," and must be tried by some standard, and that standard is the "works." "As the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without works is dead also." But there are many works acceptable to God and required of the Christian, many demands upon his care, many claims upon his charity; and among the various objects of his concern, the Christian may not always know where first to direct his attention. Brethren, whatever else he may be forced to leave undone, he will not pass by those for whom this charity is designed; for they are the children of your own neighbourhood—those with whom, in the providence of God, you are connected. They are "little ones," such as the Saviour regards with interest—"the lambs," which He gathers into His bosom, which He takes into His arms and blesses. These demand your care—that before they enter upon the business of the world they may learn its real, its truly important business, to provide for eternity; that before they encounter the temptations which must hereafter surround them, they may learn on whom to trust, and so to overcome temptation. In the school which your charity supports, they are preserved awhile from danger—not exposed to it in that unprepared and tender state which has no power of resistance. It is all which you can do. You cannot alter the nature of the world, in which the way of life is "narrow," and the way of destruction "broad;" but you will do what you can to point out the way of destruction and the way of life. You will do what is best, when you leave them, before whom those ways are open, to Him who stands forth "in righteousness, mighty to save," and who will "save to the uttermost" all those who commit themselves to His care.

Here, then, is a trial of faith. Is it sound enough to cooperate in fulfilling the will of God, whose merciful desire it is, that "not one of His little ones should perish?" Is it strong enough to induce a present sacrifice, in order to "lay up a good foundation against the time to come?" Is it sincere enough to obey the precepts which it recognizes as its rule, to imitate the example which it professes to follow? For such is the faith which is shown by its works. Yours, I trust, Christian brethren, will abide this test. It will not be found as a body without a spirit, but as a spirit animating your heart and life. That ye may "walk worthy" of God, and of that high "calling to which you are called," "be faithful in every good work;" for "so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour;" which may He of his infinite mercy grant, who alone can give the will, and the power, and the strength.

THE GREAT TEACHER.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. RICHARD BURGESS, B.D.

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH, SLOANE STREET, CHELSEA,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 11, 1849.

"When Jesus had heard therefore that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was. Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judea again."—John xi. 6, 7.

THE scene of our narrative is in the neighbourhood of Jordan, where John had first baptized. It was on the eastern side of the river, where the young ruler came running to Jesus with a desire to know how he might secure eternal life; and when he had received his final answer, and had gone away to enjoy his large possessions, Jesus took the opportunity to caution His disciples against the danger of riches. "How hardly," He said, "shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Our Lord did not mean to say that the actual possession of riches constituted a disqualification for His kingdom, but He explained, in reply to the expressions of surprise which fell from His disciples, that it was when men set their hearts on this world's wealth that they lost all desires for spiritual things. "How hard," He says, explaining His previous sentence, "how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" The "rich" man means one who, like the young ruler, leans upon his riches, and loves his large possessions better than Christ; one who for the sake of Christ will part with nothing, will practice no self-denial for the Gospel's sake—who knows not how to make a disinterested sacrifice, but says to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." For such the Redeemer says, it is "hard," it is difficult, it is impossible for them to find their way to the kingdom of Christ on earth, and therefore impossible to enter into His kingdom of glory hereafter. But the sequel of this conversation, as well as other passages of the Word of God, intimates that the very existence of this world's abundance may be a hindrance to the possessor's spiritual welfare. Great difficulties are said to lie upon the rich; while it is emphatically said, "To the poor the Gospel is preached." In the early times of Christianity, "not many rich, not many noble" were called; the first Christian churches were formed of the humblest classes of the people; it was the reproach of the primitive believers, that they were "poor;" it was made a charge against the rulers of the churches, that they admitted into their society persons who had been considered as "the offscouring of all things." The first question asked by the unbelieving Jews was, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" It was thought that the poor had merely joined the Nazarene for what they could get, but that the rich, who had got enough, knew better than to belong to a "sect which was everywhere spoken against." And in short, brethren, the religion of Jesus, in its beginning, had few or no rich men attached to it—none of the wise of this world—no men in power, except Sergius Paulus, Nicodemus who was almost ashamed of his profession, and

Joseph of Arimathea, who was at the expence of burying the body of Jesus. For three centuries it continued thus. "Not many rich, not many noble," were found among the followers of Jesus; and when Christianity at last adorned the imperial purple, and the rich and the powerful began to flock to the standard of the cross, it soon lost in simplicity what it gained in external splendour, and it was hard for the rich man to be a faithful, humble follower of the Lamb.

It was imagined by the disciples, before their Master opened to them the Scriptures after His resurrection, that a dominion of which Jesus should be the head would be established at Jerusalem, and that the people of Israel would be delivered from the foreign yoke of Rome. They therefore supposed, that before long the rich and the great ones of the country would appear for Christ, and fix Him on the throne of David. He had told them that His kingdom "came not with observation," and that it was "not of this world," but still they cherished the thought that some tangible advantage would be within their reach, if Jesus should take to Himself the power of the Messiah and reign. When, therefore, they heard this saying, that it was "easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man" to belong to His kingdom, they were amazed and astonished beyond measure. It was to them inexplicable, that any authority or dominion could gather strength or make its way in the world with none to promote its progress but the poor; they were at a loss to conceive how any one could be saved, or belong to that kingdom, if riches and possessions, so influential as they are in advancing a cause, were a bar and a hindrance to its progression. Viewing the matter in a human point of view, nothing can be done without men of influence and resources. But God can effect His great and gracious purposes without human aid: to Him it is possible to establish "a kingdom which shall never be moved," composed of the humblest portions of the human race; He can form His church of the most unpromising materials; and if the rich and the learned stand aloof, preferring to trust in their personal superiority, He can "send into the highways and hedges," and "gather His elect" from all the corners of the earth; He can dispense with wealth and power and learning, and draw together in a spiritual community those on whom He has set His love, "the sick and the maimed, and the halt and the blind." "With God," said the Redeemer, "all things are possible."

The company of the disciples having now understood by their Master's discourse, that the great secret of belonging to the kingdom of heaven lay in being willing to "give up all" for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and in giving some proof of the existence of such a disposition, Peter, who was generally the first to speak on all controverted matter, stepped forward and with his usual confidence observed to Christ, that he and his fellow-disciples had done what the young ruler had not the resolution to do: "We," said the apostle, "have left all and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" That "all" was not much, but it was their all. It was not the value of a few mended nets and a fishing boat or two that Jesus looked at, but it was the devotedness of heart and affection which accompanied the poor sacrifice. The fishermen of Galilee had left their home, and renounced the society of those whom they "loved in the flesh;" they had forsaken the blue waters of their native lake, and the well-known shores which their infant steps had trod. Some had left an aged father, some a widowed mother, others a sister or a brother, whose tears at parting showed that the separation was bitter; but they must needs sacrifice those tender of relations, for Christ had a stronger claim upon them than all; and the same constraining love which made them leave a humble roof and beloved friends, would have constrained them to leave, under similar circumstances, larger possessions if they had had them. Peter, in his ardent expectations not yet chastened, asks Jesus what they should have, who had thus left all. 'You,' replied the Saviour,—so would I paraphrase His words,—'you who have been the first to make the sacrifice—you, who have done it with so much zeal and sincerity, keeping nothing back from Me—you, who are the first to share in My humiliation, shall be distinguished with proportionate honours; you shall be to the whole Christian church what the heads of the tribes were of old to the Jewish nation; all churches shall appeal to your decision; you shall be like judges, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" concurring with Me in My judgment upon the Jewish nation, it shall be as if

you were constituted the arbiters of its fearful destiny. These are the peculiar rewards reserved for your apostolic character.' But are there no rewards for those who have less opportunities of serving Christ than the twelve heads? 'Yes,' the Redeemer answers; 'there is no man in any condition of life, or at any period of the world, or in any country, "who hath left house, or brother, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting."' Let those who are "poor in this world," but "rich in faith," look at this and take courage; and when they see the difficulties which lie in the way of those who have riches, let them thank God that they have not large possessions. What if "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" lay at the feet of one about to depart to the world which is invisible; where would be the advantage? Better to have lived a life of threescore years and ten in poverty, with the true riches, than to have "fared sumptuously," and to hear at last the awful words, There is no admission for thee into the kingdom of heaven.

But from the glorious prospects which the Redeemer opened out to His apostles, as the reward of their early attachment to Him and His cause, it might be inferred by those who stood by, that they who should first come into the Gospel kingdom, would have a great advantage over others. It might have been concluded from the words of Jesus, if they had been left without explanation, that a priority of conversion would ensure a greater abundance of reward; that those who began early to seek Christ, although they might have wrought but indifferently in His cause, would receive as a recompence something more than the most earnest labourers in His work who came late. Such an inference would have struck at the root of the Gospel covenant; it would have reckoned salvation as of debt, and not of grace; eternal life would have no longer been the free gift of God; then no longer could it have been said—"By grace are ye saved." If the long enjoyment of privilege and profession had secured a priority over those who, having few opportunities, had begun to serve God late, then "the battle would have been to the strong and the race to the swift." To correct such a notion, and to secure all the glory to God, Jesus spake on this occasion the parable of the husbandman and the labourers; in order to illustrate this saying, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Those who seem to be last in privileges and advantages, shall be first in the reward of happiness which shall be given them; and, on the other hand, many who were first in this respect shall be last in real blessing. This parable, no doubt, had a special reference to the Jewish nation, who thought that because they had been in the vineyard from the earliest period, and were "children of the stock of Abraham," they must necessarily be first in whatever kingdom the Messiah should set up; and they conceived that the Gentiles, who, if they came at all, came in at the end, would have but little advantage in comparison with themselves. But the reverse was the case. Of the thousands who were "called" by the preaching of the Word, and invited to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but few were "chosen;" it was a "little flock" that Jesus and His disciples gathered out of the twelve tribes of Israel. Those vast multitudes that followed Christ, apparently delighted with His teaching, melted away, and left but a small remnant, which continued with Him in His humiliation. But when the message was sent also unto the Gentiles, the house was filled; whole provinces were converted to the faith; and thus the last were first, and the first last.

At this point of the sacred narrative we leave the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the evangelical thread is taken up by St. John, who informs us of the event which caused Jesus to move away from the Jordan to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The passage which is repeated by the three evangelists, relating to the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, is not this journey which he is about to take into Judea; for St. John informs us, that after he had raised Lazarus from the dead He retired with His disciples to Ephraim, and there remained until He went up to Jerusalem for the last time before His crucifixion. It is, therefore, that portion of the eleventh chapter of St. John, to which our text directs our attention, that is now to be our guide in following the blessed steps of the holy Jesus, after He had spoken the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.

While Jesus was engaged in doing good beyond the Jordan, a messenger

arrived in haste with tidings from an afflicted family. The message came from two sisters, in behalf of a sick brother, whom Jesus had honoured with His peculiar friendship. Although He was a good way off from the abode of Lazarus, who was now on his sick bed and ready to die, the sisters knew where Jesus was; they appear to have trusted Him, and to have followed Him in thought when they could not see Him. His presence was virtually in that house at Bethany, although He was absent in the body; and as soon as a family affliction is sent upon them, their first care is to get Jesus into the house. The message they sent was very short; it neither pressed, nor petitioned, nor prescribed to Jesus the time or the manner of His assistance, but it simply related the case as it was: "Lo, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They do not say, 'He whom we love,' or 'He who loveth Thee,' but "He whom Thou lovest." The encouragement is fetched from the love of God to man: for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." My brethren, it is well when friends and relations in a season of domestic grief take means of securing the presence of Christ. It is too often the case, that He is invited into a family for the first time, when some member of the same is sick; but even then it is well. And well it is, to have brothers or sisters who are sufficiently anxious for the eternal welfare of the relative to send for the minister of Christ—not that he may heal the sick, but that he may tell him of the great Physician, who came to heal the spiritual sickness of all who feel themselves to be diseased by sin; and that is to bring Jesus into the house. And it will be enough to spread the case before Him, in all its truth and simplicity, appealing to His love which was shown forth in the redemption of the world: "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick."

The messenger received his answer, and carried back the words of comfort to the afflicted sisters. But Jesus made no haste. He knew, by His almighty power, that Lazarus would soon expire, or had even then expired; but his friends at Bethany were to be informed that his sickness was "not unto death." Death would not be the final event of his sickness. Lazarus, indeed, died: but yet it might be said, he did not die. His case so remarkable, and now rendered so mysterious by the Redeemer's message, was to afford an opportunity for the manifesting of God's glorious power. And such is the design of the afflictions of all God's saints; it is that He may show them His glory and His favour—that the chastisement may in the end "yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to the praise and the glory of God."

It is said, in the words which I have read for a text, that after the message from Bethany had arrived, Jesus remained for two days without moving from the place where He was. He does not appear to have declared His intention of following the messenger to Bethany; and it was not until the third day that He proposed to His disciples—"Let us go into Judea again." This proposal of venturing again into the country from which He had but recently escaped with His life, was startling to the disciples, and they ventured to remonstrate with their Master, showing at the same time a tender concern for His safety: "Master, the Jews sought of late to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" It is written of the eternal Being, that "His way is in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known." The Redeemer had a design in remaining where He was for two whole days, after He had received the message from the sisters of Lazarus; but He did not think it good to disturb the minds of His disciples before the moment of departure. He designed to perform the most remarkable of His miracles in a public manner; and in order that His power might be displayed so as to convince all who were not wilfully blind, He chose to postpone His journey until Lazarus should have died, and He so ordered His time as not to arrive at Bethany until the dead man had lain in the grave long enough to see corruption. One long day it cost the messenger to bring the news to Judea that Lazarus was sick; two days did Jesus remain, before He began His journey; and when He arrived, perhaps on the fifth day, Lazarus had been dead four days already. So that there could be no question but that this would be a resurrection from the dead. He knew that His friend had fallen asleep in death before the messenger had reached the Jordan; He knew what He was about to do, in performing His most signal miracle; but He kept the secret from His disciples for two days, for He would not unnecessarily try their minds beforehand with the thought of facing persecution. See here, my brethren, the tender regard of Jesus for His

people. He loves not to lay the least trial upon them, until it is necessary; He wholly conceals from their knowledge the afflictions that await them, until the moment when they must come. For "two days," and for two years, and for a long period, He keeps His purpose secret, whether it be for bringing joy or sorrow to His people; He permits them not to be overwhelmed with the prospect of trials to come, nor to be intoxicated with a distant view of prosperity. And little do they gain by remonstrating with Him, when the time for trial comes; as if He had not the power of keeping in safety those whom He invites to go with Him! "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

The Redeemer, having intimated to His disciples that He had a work to perform during the time allotted to Him in this lower world, and that He must not allow the opportunity to pass away, then informed His disciples of the object of His proposed journey. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." But they, not at first apprehending His meaning, representing death as He did under the gentle image of sleep, replied to Jesus, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." If it be a natural, quiet repose, the sick man will recover: what, therefore, will be the necessity for Jesus going again into Judea? The Redeemer, keeping them no longer in suspense, and using no more metaphor preparing their minds for the shock, said unto them plainly, "Lazarus is dead." He expressed His satisfaction, on account of His disciples, that He had not been present at his death, because now they would have an opportunity of witnessing such an act of Omnipotence as would confirm their faith, and for ever settle the point that He (Jesus) was the Son of God and equal with God. "I am glad," he says, "for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye might believe." And now, said He, let us go directly to Bethany.

The courage and resolution of the sacred company was now put to the test. 'Shall we venture, or not?' was the question that was probably raised. 'Shall we go with our Master into such imminent danger? How can we remain behind, without His gracious presence?' Then Thomas, more intrepid than the rest, and more disposed to be present and see with his own eyes, than receive intelligence from others, stepped forward and animated his fellow-disciples. 'Danger or no danger,' said Thomas, 'we will see the end.' "Let us go," said he, "that we may also die with Him." Yes, my brethren, better to die with Jesus, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," than to live on without Him in a miserable existence! Although the faith of Thomas afterwards proved weak, yet here he shows a gracious readiness to die with his Lord; he is ready to be a partaker of His sufferings, although he was slow to believe all that Moses and the prophets wrote concerning Him. Strong affection and feeble faith are sometimes found together. It is true that "faith worketh by love," but the love may sometimes overflow the faith. My brethren, never let us separate ourselves from Jesus. Better to endure hardships than to part company with Him. "Where Thou diest I will die," should be the holy resolution of every believer. In difficult times Christians should animate one another: "Let us go"—let us unite; let us stand fast without wavering. This should be the watchword of the children of God—"Let us go, that we may die with Him." And what need we fear, beloved, if Jesus be with us? We may go into the thick of the enemy's camp, and "the arrow that flieth by day" shall not wound us; we may venture ourselves in the line of duty,

"Where fierce diseases wait about,
To hurry mortals home,"

and "the pestilence that walketh in darkness" shall not come nigh us. That power which protects the believer, radiates from "the Sun of righteousness," which cheers the way and dissipates all the forebodings of evil. If Jesus invites and says, "Let us go," it is enough; and if there be for a moment a feeling of dismay, or a lingering look cast behind upon all we are leaving for the sake of following Him, let it be remembered that we are at length promised to be "more than conquerors," and that "to him that overcometh" will there be given the eternal honour of sitting upon His throne in glory.

INDECISION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. T. J. JUDKIN, M.A.

PREACHED IN SOMERS TOWN CHAPEL, ST. PANCRAS,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1849.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?"—1 Kings xviii. 21.

GENERALLY speaking, a strict consistency is maintained betwixt the character of a man and the object of his pursuit. His actions bear a conclusive testimony as to the nature of his individual purpose. There is a oneness of his whole being with the matter at issue. As his companion, you are left to no uncertain guess-work in determining the uppermost thing which engrosses his thoughts, concentrates his affections, quickens his desires, or invigorates his endeavours. The worldling is ever true to the worldling's creed; his god will not allow of any dereliction of duty, of any niggardness of service, of any neglects or deficiencies in the homage required. Let thus ambition be the ruling idol—and the devotedness of his powers proves the sincerity of his affiance. Let wealth be the ruling idol—and his "rising up early, and sitting up late, and eating the bread of carefulness," show how perfect is the agreement betwixt him and the influence which presides. Or let pleasure be the ruling idol—and in all the places of her resort, and under all the forms she assumes, the restlessness of his research, and his passionate exultation over his discoveries, will at once avouch for the truth of his fealty. In such instances there can be no accusation of inconsistency; no oasis occurs, no gap presents itself, between the admission of the man and the conduct of the man. There is a perfect tallying the one with the other; a union that has no mar-ring—a conformity that is continuous, unbroken. And all follows as we might naturally expect.

But it is not so with regard to spiritual things. Try yourselves, brethren. Who of you does not believe that there is a God, to whom you are morally accountable? What man does not believe that he has a soul within him, which will bear the complexion of its future and eternal destiny according to the complexion of its present exercises and enjoyments? Who of you does not believe that by nature he is an ignorant, a guilty, a condemned, a helpless, and a perishing sinner, and that all the mighty interests of his being are bound up in the cordial reception of One who, as the Son of the living God, left the bosom of His everlasting Father, to give light, to bestow pardon, to afford justification, to vouchsafe strength, and to impart life? None, surely, will deny these truths; none can here, for each makes confession of them, as a part of his creed. And yet how many of you, so far from embodying them in the life and showing the power of their daily influences in your temper and carriage, exhibit an inconsistency so flagrant, and withal so pregnant with cunning mischiefs, as to make the wise shudder and the pious weep! You do identify your practice with your belief, in worldly matters; and ought you not to do so where the claims are immeasurably greater—in spiritual? None may doubt your fidelity and zeal where you have fleshly masters; ought they when you openly, as in this place, own and avow your Master in heaven? Unbelief, it is true, has slain its thousands, but indecision its tens of thousands. To vacillate in ordinary things may be venial, but in religious it is criminal and ruinous. Some poor interest (at the best) of the perishing body may be affected by the one, while that by the other is the interest of the soul.

"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, then follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

"How long halt ye between two opinions?" That some few words of mine upon this text, in the way of solemn meditation, may conduce to your spiritual good, let us now ask for those influences which can alone enlighten and sanctify, for Jesus Christ's sake.

First, indecision in its nature and prevalence; secondly, indecision in its causes; thirdly, indecision in its consequences.

I. First, indecision in its nature and prevalence.

1. In its nature. The mass of society does not consist of only two descriptions of persons—those who are eminently pious and those who are flagrantly wicked—but there is also an intermediate or middle class, the victims of indecision; bespeaking that state of the mind and the heart which, instead of cleaving wholly to God, or yielding altogether to the world, alternates with both; an indecision which, as if passive to the influence of opposite claims, bends now to the one and now to the other, as accident or circumstances shall determine—now governed by the human, now by the Divine claims; an indecision that in seeking to couple the allegiance of two masters is a traitor to both—admitting, more or less, the force of Gospel statements, the powerful appeals of "the truth as it is in Jesus," while the occasion lasts, so that there is a sort of turning to Him, and being again open to the seductions of sensual objects, so that there is a turning to them; an equiponderant weight, having no settled place, but shifting to this side or that, as the case may be—the opponents pitching and pulling the man now hither and now thither, as if in contention for his whole captivity—the voice of the one saying "You are mine," and that of the other saying "You are mine," and the man is neither's.

Yes, it is a melancholy spectacle, the changes which such a man undergoes. So great are these, that one might almost think his personal volition were lost. Behold him on the Sabbath, seated among the children of God; see his solemn earnestness of manner—how reverently he kneels—with what devotional fervour he appears to repeat the responses of our Litany; and then how attentive and fixed his eye, whilst the preacher utters the appalling denunciations of the moral law, or discourses of the affecting manifestations of Jesu's love, or of the privileges of promise and the blessedness of that new covenant which was sealed by the very blood of the Lamb of God! And then follow the man home. Can that be he, who, fresh from the posture of a devout worshipper, enters into all the frivolities of a worldly conversation? Can that man be he, who mixes himself with the throng of the dissipated and the gay, in the public promenade? Or, if he abstain from these things, can that man be he, who upon the morrow plunges himself so absolutely into the love of the world, and follows its vain customs and follies, as though it were "a continuing city," and not that narrow and retiring slip of sand, which we are only permitted to occupy for a time, that through the Divine grace we may become prepared for the blessedness of eternity? Such a man presents one of the many instances of the undecided. He dares not resist the voice in the temple, but he carries nothing out of it to convince the children of the world that he has been there; the demand being altogether weak and ineffectual, "My son, give Me thine heart."

2. The prevalence of indecision. I believe that by far the larger mass of all our congregations is composed of the undecided. Thousands say their prayers, who do not pray; thousands verbally assent to the truths of Christ, where there is nothing but the dead letter, where there is no spirit, no demonstration, no power; thousands say "Lord, Lord," in the temple, who shrink from pronouncing their confessions where their testimony would be influential for good; thousands sing hymns, without a chord being touched within, "making melody" where only the melody can be made that is heard by God, "making melody in the heart;" thousands "spring up" in the ranks of profession, who when a little persecution arises "fall away," "the root of the matter" not being in them; thousands are called Christians, only because they happened to be born in Christendom, or because of the impress of education, or the weight of parental authority, or the influences of custom, and who can have no spiritual decision, inasmuch as they are not "led by the Spirit," since hitherto, instead of seeking importunately for His guidance and His strengthening, they have resisted His operations. I said, thousands—thousands upon thousands in this land; and I put it with trembling to yourselves:—if the

sword of the Lord God, in separating the undecided from the decided, were now to pass through this congregation, would not its sweep make an awful gap? would not fifties fall from the right hand to the left?

II. Indecision in its causes. And these are multiform.

1. One is pride. This is ever lingering within us, checking the fulness of our reliance upon God. *The claims of self thwart, weaken, make void the claims of Christ; they divert the thoughts and affections from Him.* While self is dominant, how can a man say with integrity of belief—"In the flesh dwelleth no good thing?" How can he say, with the singleness and fixedness of conviction—"It is Christ that justifieth?" How can he say, in the unreserved candour of his soul—That economy has my firm and unalterable trust which is distinct from, and at variance to, the system of "the wise in their own conceits?"

2. Indecision, again, arises from ignorance—ignorance of the relative value and comparative importance of things. Thus: if "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the true and unspeakable privileges of His covenant, were in all their greatness before the mind's eye, as infinitely above all other riches and privileges, why, it follows that they would have the first place in our hearts. If the value of the soul, in all the breadth of its interests, were brought side by side with the interests of the poor and the perishing body, could there be a "halting between two opinions," as to the concentration of your care and the direction of your efforts? If the favour of God, in all its blessedness, were rightly apprehended, could there be any lingering, any looking back to the favour of the world?

3. Indecision springs from our sloth. It is the reverse of the effort to maintain "a good confession." Decision in being "on the Lord's side," involves the necessity of great and painful self-denial. It summons us to the field of a new warfare. The soldier must fight under the Captain he joins; no rust must gather upon his sword by day, and the watchfires must not be suffered to go out by night; he must always have on his armour, and be ready to be up and doing.

4. Indecision proceeds from the love of the world. Whilst the heart is buried there, how can it be given to another? The affections cannot be placed upon two objects diametrically opposed to each other. "Ye cannot," says Christ, "serve God and Mammon." A man cannot love the world, and yet love Him who declared, "I am not of the world." The undecided heart is the divided heart; and the divided heart, on the side of God, is the rejected heart.

5. Indecision sometimes arises from the fear of man. It partakes of that moral cowardice which shrinks from the names that the malicious may invent to stigmatize, or the oppressions which the powerful may bear down upon an honest profession; though, perhaps the fear of ridicule may tend more to prevent religious decision than the edicts of the sternest persecution. Yes, the supercilious sneer or the opprobrious epithet has scared many a man from becoming an avowed follower of Jesus, whom no pains or penalties would have intimidated. A laugh sometimes irritates more than a blow.

6. Indecision has another cause in presumption. As though God could be satisfied with a little, and that little the man has always the power to keep; as if the Divine Being had but one moral attribute, mercy, and that the merest leaning towards Him would be enough to ensure its exercise; as if from the shedding of a few tears of penitence at our convenient time, or the utterance of some prayer on a sick-bed, all that is necessary could be done and it would be well with us at the last; as though holiness had no iron pen to record transgression, and justice no flaming sword to visit the whole with righteous reprobation.

7. Indecision has a cause in the neglect of prayer—of prayer for the assistance of that Holy Spirit, who being the "Guide into all truth," enables us to apprehend all the mysteries of godliness. Indecision must characterize those who are strangers to this holy duty, and who by consequence have not received the influences of that Spirit who leadeth into all truth. Whatever the acuteness of their natural intellect, or however stout-hearted they may be in their constitutional courage, they cannot see in the one case the excellency of the things of Christ without the clear shining of the light of God's Holy

Spirit, nor have power to declare them without the direct imbual of His strength. It is only thus, even by humble, God-seeking prayer, that the Redeemer of men can be personally apprehended, in the greatness and glory of His spiritual offices, and that the believing soul, above all the infirmities of weakness and fear, inspired with a holy energy, and being carried "from strength to strength," rises with the occasion in publishing abroad his high testimony, and magnifying the glory of Christ Jesus, his Redeemer and his Lord.

Many here, I am sure, are conscious of their religious indecision; its evidence is before them in the leaf of every day's experience; and while they have gone with me into the various causes which I have suggested, I would more particularly entreat, that they would especially consider the last; for it is not in their own power to gather their thoughts and affections from the world and transfer them to Christ—it is not according to the volitions of their own minds that they can seek Him earnestly and serve Him faithfully. But let such remember, that the feeblest and the most wavering may become established through the agency of prayer—prayer which on all occasions of need and trial has given intrepidity and steadfastness, zeal and perseverance, to the children of God.

III. We would speak, briefly, of indecision in its consequences. And these are full of evil.

1. Indecision, in the first place, is an insult to the authority and the character of God. God, as a lawgiver, demands a full and perfect obedience; but indecision withholds this—reckless of His justice, regardless of His entire character. God, as a benefactor, claims the unreserved dedication of the heart; but indecision parcels out, amidst the abounding goodness of the Lord, the offerings of a niggard acknowledgment. God, as a Saviour, devised and carried out a mysterious and a mighty plan, whereby we may be delivered from our offences, rescued from the power of sin, and redeemed from His vengeance—whereby we may be restored to favour and enter into reconciliation with an offended Judge—whereby we may secure the privileges and become partakers of the blessings of the new covenant, through faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ; but indecision virtually makes the scheme of salvation a vain thing, and the promises of God of no avail. Is God a jealous God?—it raises an idol in His place. Is God a wise God?—it turns His wisdom into foolishness. Is God a pure God?—it would associate with His service the service of sin. Is God a just God?—it challenges the equity of His appeals. Is God a God of love?—whatever the richness or the plenitude of His mercies, it is full of ingratitude. It is thus an insult to the whole moral character of God.

2. Indecision works evil upon others. Every man, whether he thinks it or not, is surrounded by witnesses; and the world is sharp-sighted in observing those flaws of inconsistency which bring so many professions of religion into contempt; where such as attend its ordinances, only leave them to exhibit the selfishness, the covetousness, and the earthly-mindedness of the natural man. An obstruction is thus necessarily set up to the progress of Divine truth, and you are sinning against the high interests of your fellows, by confirming them in their prejudices, by strengthening thus their dislike of the Gospel, whose acceptance among men you ought by all the means in your power to promote. You are thus the instruments of casting back from, instead of leading to, the Fountain of Judah, whose waters are pregnant with all comfort and blessedness to the soul. The carnal mind finds a new reason for its infidelity and its opposition, in every discovered discrepancy betwixt the assumed principles of a man and his open actions; whilst the timid are the more discouraged, and the weak meet with a fresh stumbling-block in their way. Oh! you must remember, you are not living for yourselves alone, but for others. Every one bearing the Christian name is "set for the rising or for the falling of many;" and this awful secret, if it be a secret, shall come out at the bar of God. The Christian has social, as well as individual responsibilities, for which he shall be called to solemn account there.

3. The undecided are the self-deceived. A hope is begotten which will never be realised; their day-dream of good, as a dream, cheats them with its images and all passes away in air.

4. The undecided, again, are criminal. "Whatsoever," it is said, "is not

of faith is sin." They offer violence to the direct commands of God—to the constraining influences of His Holy Spirit—to the authority of Jesu's precepts and Jesu's life—to the monitions of a sound reason—to the convictions of conscience—to the laws and the testimonies of a holy and a wise experience in others.

5. The undecided man is the unrecompensed man ; self excluded from the privileges to be enjoyed within the Christian pale. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways ; let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." A half service brings no half blessing ; "he that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad ;" "he who is not for, is against Him." This is the only alternative. He who confesses Him not before men, (that is to say, decidedly confesses Him,) shall be himself the unconfessed by Him before His Father and the holy angels.

6. The undecided man is the unsafe man. Hanging doubtfully, as betwixt two worlds, he has two worlds around him ; he neither belongs to this world, nor to that kingdom which Christ said "is not of this world." When temptation comes, he is without resource ; when dangers multiply, he has no way of escape ; when death surprises, there is no arm to bear him up, no "rod and staff" to comfort him.

7. The undecided man is a condemned man. He being "neither hot nor cold," presents a state of Divine rejection. To die is to die under the ban of utter retribution. It is said that "the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Oh ! brethren, let me call upon you, by the very state of your dearest and imperishable interests, to halt no longer betwixt two opinions, but to declare yourselves manfully and fearlessly on the Lord's side. To be the undecided is to be the "almost Christian." "Almost !" A man is almost at the door, when the door is closed ; a man is almost at the goal, when the crown is given to another ; a man is almost at the shore, when he suffers shipwreck. Be not, I beseech you, "almost," but "altogether such" as are the true disciples of the Lord Jesus, as are the sincere and earnest followers of the Lamb ; that so you may receive the peace of the Lamb here, and enter into His glory hereafter and for ever.

THE FALL.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Additional Curates' Fund.

"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."—Ecclesiastes vii. 29.

THERE can be no subject of discourse better adapted to cherish that humility of spirit which the season of Lent requires us to cultivate, than that of man's original condition and the change produced therein by transgression. We desire, therefore, to examine these points with great carefulness. We do not, indeed, suppose you ignorant of the truths that man was created in innocence and fell from his first estate through disobedience; but we believe that there often lurks in men's minds a suspicion with regard to the apostacy of Adam, which, if followed out and avouched, would amount to an impeachment of the loving-kindness of God. And it is of great moment that such suspicion be altogether dispersed. Until we understand rightly the fall of man, both in its causes and in its consequences, there is no likelihood of our appreciating that redemption to our commemoration of which the weeks of Lent are preparatory. It seems unquestionable, that much, if not most, of that repugnance which is exhibited towards the Gospel of Christ may be traced to ignorance or misconception in regard to our position as fallen creatures. The Gospel is constructed on the supposition that man is a being who has destroyed himself. If you carry this supposition along with you as you examine the Gospel, the several parts of the scheme, though all amazing, are all consistent; but the moment you put away this supposition, and contemplate man as occupying any other position than one of ruin, and that, too, a ruin wholly chargeable on himself, you introduce mysteries into the scheme of redemption, which seem to prove that this scheme could not emanate from God. And if it be essential to correct views of the Gospel that we rightly understand our estate as the posterity of Adam, the propositions deducible from our text are such as demand frequent and accurate investigation. In what condition was Adam formed—through what means did he fall from that condition—in what way are we ourselves involved in his apostacy,—these are questions which are either answered or suggested by the statement, that "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions."

With no expectation, then, of advancing anything with which you have not long been familiar, but with some hope that through God's help we may show you the bearings, and commend to you the importance, of well-known truths, we proceed to survey, separately, man as "made upright," and man as "seeking out many inventions." Under the first head of discourse we shall have to show you, that there was no fault in man's original constitution; under the second, that man brought wilfully on himself his weakness and his wretchedness; and under both we shall take occasion to meet such objections as are not purely captious, but may fairly suggest themselves to a right-minded inquirer.

Now you are all acquainted with the description which the Bible gives us of man as originally created, that he was made "in the image of God." You know, moreover, that the Almighty is a spirit, and that it could not have been in bodily lineaments that there existed resemblance between the Creator and the creature. The image impressed upon man as he first rose at the bidding of Deity, and which warranted the lofty account of his being fashioned after the features of the invisible God, must have been purely and exclusively a moral image. Adam could have been like his Maker only because, as the Divine nature is essentially holy, holiness pervaded, yea actuated, the human. There were, indeed, other respects in which resemblance subsisted, but they are altogether subordinate. And as this creature walked the paradise which was full of sacramental mystery, and presented the homage of the beauteous world of which he had been made high priest, we may declare of him that he was like his Creator, not so much because gifted with a powerful and soaring mind, nor because chief of the sphere allotted to his expatiations, as because the motions of his spirit were all in righteousness, and the understanding, the will, and the affections harmonized in holiness. And it is in thorough consistency with this description of man that our text declares of him that God made him upright. We wish you to examine with some attention wherein this uprightness consisted, and then you will understand the disorganisation of which rebellion was parent. It is important, whenever we compare ourselves in our degradation with Adam in his glory, that we avoid equally the exaggerating and the extenuating the marks of separation. We are to remember that we are not beings of different natures, but of strictly the same nature, though in different conditions. Adam, while yet in his glorious estate, possessed, we may believe, no faculties but what descended to his children. So that if we would at all understand what Adam originally was, we are not to labour at sketching a creature with superhuman perfections; we are rather to take our own powers and our own properties, and suppose them purged from pollution, and wrought up to purity; just as, if anxious to determine the former glory of some architectural structure whose ruins were before us, we should not employ our imagination in delineating architectural majesty, but, poring over the fragments, should endeavour to give its altitude to every column and its span to every arch, and thus out of the wreck to reconstruct, at least in thought, the magnificent edifice.

Now the understanding, the will, and the affections, these, you must all be aware, are the component parts of the human soul, or, to speak perhaps more accurately, the powers with which man is endowed, regarded in his spiritual capacity. It is the great business of our understanding to decide between truth and error, evil and good; it is the province of our will to determine, or make choice, between different courses submitted to it by the understanding; whilst the affections, fastening upon some objects, and repugnant to others, are as motives to man in his resolves and in his pursuits. Now we believe of Adam, as of one of ourselves, that, intellectually considered, these three powers, with spheres of action thus defined, made up his endowments. But there is no difficulty, alas! in perceiving, that the faculties in question are sadly defective and wrongly biassed in ourselves. Just think. The understanding of the most highly gifted amongst you reaches its conclusions slowly and painfully; and, after all, those conclusions are as often erroneous as true. Even when the understanding decides rightly, discriminating accurately what is good and what evil, why there is no certainty as to the choice of the will; on the contrary, there is almost as great likelihood that this faculty will determine to follow the evil as though the verdict of the understanding had pronounced it the good; and all the while the affections exert a mighty influence over the will, compelling it, as it were, to take part with the inclination—for the will is little better than the slave of the appetite, and even the understanding falters in its decisions when they tend to the thwarting an imperious desire. These are

statements whose truth will be readily allowed by all who are in the habit of studying themselves. But, if true, they prove a diseased and disorganized condition of the faculties of the soul. These faculties, in place of each preserving a separate jurisdiction, jostle one the other, so that the result is little more than a great moral anarchy, and man, with a mighty equipment of powers for investigating truth, and with capacities for choice and attachment which would fix him high amongst the orders of creation—man presents nothing but the spectacle of a feeble enquirer after the first elements of knowledge, of a deceived and misjudging creature who “puts darkness for light and light for darkness,” of a slave who has surrendered himself to the tyranny of a lust or the chase of a phantom.

But just suppose the disorganization corrected, each faculty restored to its former vigour and retaining its own province: we have then the understanding marching in its strength across broad fields of intelligence, separating at a glance the good from the evil, and gathering in, without laborious and unwearying effort, the mighty harvest of universal truth; we have the will never agitated by conflicting interests, and never poised between opposite claims, adopting instantly the decisions of the understanding, so that if a course be right there is a certainty of its being followed; and we have, further, the affections all moving in beautiful harmony, and all centering on pure objects: love encircling nothing but what the Almighty approves, and omitting nothing that is blessed with His favour; hope dwelling only on further manifestations of the Deity, on holier scenes and times of deeper communing with all that is righteous and glorious in creation; fear limited to sin; and joy, though not always in exercise, resulting from nothing whose remembrance can bring sorrow. We have, we say, the affections each active in its own sphere, but none interfering with the understanding, and the will serving to ask and approve decisions on the side of righteousness and truth. So that man’s breast, instead of being the theatre of jarring passions and contending emotions, is the home of perpetual peace, the scene of unbroken composure. And such, we may suppose—such a being, with the understanding, the will and the affections thus pure and thus powerful—such we suppose Adam to have been, as “made in the image of God.” Whilst the image was yet undefaced, Adam differed from ourselves, not by the possession of properties which have departed from our nature, but in having an understanding vigorous and unsullied; a will which had an entire freedom, so that there was nothing of that bias which amounts practically in ourselves to absolute bondage; and affections which turned naturally and earnestly towards God, and found in Him entire satisfaction. Yes, this was man as originally formed; this was the being on whom was impressed the likeness of his Maker, and on whom, as His last work, the Almighty poured the riches of His skill. And when beauty and freshness were mantling the earth, and nature in her various departments was sending up her deep, though silent adoration, this was a being worthy to stand forth as king and priest of a glorious creation, to sway the sceptre and present the devotions of the new province with which God had enriched His empire; and of such a being it may surely be affirmed, “God made man upright,” though, alas! we are compelled to add, “but he sought out many inventions.”

Thus, then, we pass from the creation to the fall of man. And it would never have been thought, that thus installed on a mighty throne, and ministering in a gorgeous sanctuary, possessed of a clear understanding, a free will, and pure affections, Adam would have turned aside from loyalty to his Maker, and joined the ranks of the apostate. At first sight it would seem almost incredible, that a being endowed and circumstanced as was Adam, probably informed that not only his own happiness, but that of an unnumbered posterity, depended on his obedience to a single command, should have signally failed in his probation, and provoked a curse which the least steadfastness might

have averted. Our only business now, however, in examining this matter, is with the truth that "God made man upright," and that in making him upright He had done enough for His creature. If we have been correct in our description of Adam in his uprightness, it follows that this father of human kind was quite free to choose, but that everything consistent with moral accountability conspired to ensure his choosing the good. You may, indeed, say that God might have so constituted Adam that he should have been incapable of falling, and you may ask, 'Why was he not thus constituted?' If you mean that human nature might have been such that to sin would have been impossible, we believe you to assert what is altogether incorrect. An incapacity of sinning is the property of no finite nature. The archangel, sublime in his prowess, is nevertheless finite—and what is finite may be measured and matched by temptation; and you must pass from the created to the uncreated, and bow down before Him who is every way infinite, ere you can find a being of whom to declare, that he cannot sin, because by nature inaccessible to evil. But then you will say, 'If not by nature, undoubtedly by grace, our first parents might have been prevented from yielding; grace in sufficient measure to maintain them in their obedience had been granted to many angels, and might, if God had seen fit, have been granted to man.' Yes, it might; but grace, from its very nature, must be altogether free; God may give it or withhold it, according to His pleasure; and if, as we have shown, there was no flaw in the original constitution of Adam, his powers having all that perfectness which consisted with creatureship, it could not have been at variance with any attribute of God to withhold that grace which should have kept him from falling. That God should have placed His creature in a state of probation, the trial being quite within the strength, and the reward of obedience unspeakably magnificent, you can imagine nothing more equitable, nothing more worthy every way of Deity; but there can be no probation where there is that prevention which you think might have been extended to Adam; if you allow it worthy of God to place His creature on trial, you make it indispensable that He should suffer him to fall. But if there still lurk a feeling in your minds—a feeling not to be met by argument—that it was unlike a merciful God to permit His creature to work out for himself a heritage of woe and of shame, why, then, we call upon you to remember, that whilst allowing the evil God had determined the antidote. Indeed, I do marvel, that any who are privileged with the knowledge of redemption through Christ should find in the instance of the fall matter for cavilling at Divine loving-kindness. It might be expected, that if we told a heathen tribe of the first Adam's transgression, and said not a word of the second's interference—if we showed how the destinies of myriads had been given into the keeping of a solitary individual, and how he had been allowed to send down to the furthest families of his line the entailments of a terrible curse, and if all the while we were silent on the work of mediation, and breathed no syllable on the descent of a Surety, who espoused the cause of these desolate families and won for them far more than their forefather lost,—it might then, we say, be expected that the impression on the mind of our Pagan audience would be one of surprise that we should represent God as love, and yet as permitting, though He might have prevented, human apostacy. But that those who know what Christ has wrought out for the fallen the marvellous and abundant provision made for their deliverance—that they should account the allowing man to fall inconsistent with God's love—we are persuaded that this marks an ignorance of redemption, and proves the murderer unacquainted with that vast sweep of mercies which is opened by the Gospel. I doubt not the glory of an unfallen man, I question not the splendour and the loveliness of an unblighted paradise; very noble must Adam have been, and beautiful amidst the surrounding creation, when God conversed familiarly with man, and earth was as the shrine of its Maker; and sublime indeed would have been the spectacle, and majestic our inheritance, had each of

us been born in the image of God, and secured against losing the resemblance ; but I would not exchange what I am, if linked by faith with the Mediator Christ, for what I should have been had Adam never transgressed. I know not what place would then have belonged to our nature amongst the orders of creation, but this I know, that now it is associated with the Divine, and imagination itself fails to measure its dignity. I know that by occupying my place, suffering and obeying in my stead, the Son of God has done vastly more than reinstate me in my forfeited possession : He has set me “ far above principalities and powers ;” He has opened to me happiness which is not to be reached by aught else created ; He has brought me into a relationship with Deity, which could not have resulted from creation. Finite though I am, there are bonds of union between myself and the Infinite, which connect not the cherub and seraph in all their splendour with the Father of spirits ; weighed down at present with the burdens which attach to an alienated seed, we yet know that as believers in Christ we are begotten again to “ an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” And you may tell us of the loveliness of Eden, and of the wavings of the tree of life, and of the flowings of that river which watered the garden of the Lord ; but we have heard of a city where the tree of life bears “ twelve manner of fruits,” and where the river springs direct from the throne of God and of the Lamb ; and though we cannot describe the magnificence or the blessedness of that city, builded as it is for the home of the redeemed, it is enough to assure us of its unequalled beauty, that God declares of the things prepared for the followers of Christ, that “ eye hath not seen” them, “ nor ear heard” them, “ neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive them.” And whilst we know that when permitting man to fall God had arranged that amazing scheme which will fix throughout eternity the delighted wonder of all holy beings, oh ! can we think of the permission as inconsistent with lovingkindness ? He might have arrested man in the moment of apostacy ; yes, He might ; He might, by a direct interference with the free-will of His creature, have prevented all occasion for the mightiest manifestation of His love ; He might have allowed no room to be made for the humiliation of His Son and for the unspeakable exaltation of humanity ; He might have compelled man to keep the path of obedience, and thus have forbidden the arrival of that fearful emergence, which as met by the interference of Christ, has produced to mankind the very noblest of privileges, and given occasion for such displays of the attributes of God as possibly are felt, in all the energy of persuasiveness and warning, in every district of the intelligent universe. Oh ! then, to murmur because Adam was allowed to destroy us by his apostacy is to forget or to deny that Christ redeemed us by His agony ; to make it matter of complaint that we were suffered to fall is to repine at being placed unspeakably higher than we originally stood. And though when I think of the fearful abyss into which Adam was about to descend, and picture the wretchedness which a solitary act was to fasten on himself and entail on his children, the first feeling may be, that love would stretch forth the hand and snatch back the wanderer, ere he wrought out the ruin,—yet when I remember, that while God looked on the coming desolation, He looked also on the coming Deliverer—that when the spectacle rose before Him of a world overspread with pollution and misery, there rose also the covenant of His Son, that He would do battle on this earth with the powers of evil, and win for its tenantry a far more glorious portion than He had permitted them to lose, oh ! then, it is in His permitting man to fall that I read the exceeding love of the Creator ; and when you urge that a compassionate God might have been expected to uphold and establish His creature, I point you to the cross, and tell you of the triumphs of Christ in the flesh ; whilst, if you would insinuate that due strength was not given to our forefather, I answer you with the emphatic and pregnant declaration of the text—“ Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions.”

Now in thus examining the truth of man's original rectitude, we have incidentally treated that of his ruin being wholly chargeable on himself. We have shown you what may be called a necessity that he should be created, though upright, yet capable of sinning; and it cannot be matter of surprise that one capable of sinning should have actually sinned. It was not through any fault in his original constitution that Adam fell away. That constitution was indeed mutable, because Adam was a creature, and no created nature, not the very highest, can in itself be immutable. But there was no defect in Adam, unless you choose to reckon it a defect that he was finite. The understanding could immediately distinguish truth from error; the will was prompt to follow the verdict of the understanding; and the passions were all held in thorough subordination; so that, comparing the circumstances and the endowments of Adam, you may see that he possessed sufficient power for passing successfully through his probation, and that, having been created, he might, had he chosen, have continued in uprightness. Just, then, and true, and merciful was God in His dealings with the father of our race, for man could not have fallen had he not of his own will "sought out inventions." This brief description has been applicable from the first. It was that they might "be as gods," that they might "know good and evil," that they might advance themselves in the scale of intelligence, for this it was that Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and set at nought the positive command. They tried the experiment, and, with all the consequences of failure, bequeathed to their children the fatal wish to invent good for themselves rather than to seek it in God. The restless desire to improve their condition and the obstinate resolve to attempt the improvement in their own might and wisdom—these have been the characteristics of Adam's descendants; the one marking the struggles of the principle of immortality, the other departure from original righteousness. I gather the presence of an undying spirit from that seeking out of inventions which is observable in man. Even in that disposition to search and to enquire which is occupied with a present and temporary system, there are high indications of a being who shall have more than a transient duration. In every investigation into the sublime and curious secrets of nature, in the lofty discoveries of science and in the exquisite productions of art, we have evidences of powers which seem to crave a broader stage and a fuller development; and we cannot contemplate the marchings of genius, and the solemn processions of noble thought, and the successful divings of adventurous skill, without thinking, of a creature who, despite the thousand trammels that are around him, walks abroad amongst the stars, and stirs the mountains with his machinery, and makes a path across the waters, that he cannot in all likelihood have been formed for a momentary existence, but that there must yet be a scene where, in the fulness of his strength, the universe shall unfold to him all its hidden magnificence. But it is in the seeking out inventions for his own salvation that the grand proof lies of man's immortality. The distinguishing characteristic of man, as compared with the brute, is commonly said to be reason, but we think it might with more justice be said to be religion. The inferior creation display often an extraordinary sagacity which marks at least a great approach towards reason, but religion is peculiar to man. No other animal carries even its semblance; while he in his lowest degradation cannot free himself altogether from its presence. Wherever you find a man, you find a creature with a consciousness that there is a higher being than himself, whose displeasure is fatal, and whose favour must at any cost be sought. This consciousness is the high characteristic of man; it is the characteristic of an immortal being; it proves of its possessor that he bears within himself a principle of immortality, and that he is the subject of future trial and retributive dealing. Alas! that in its ordinary exhibitions it should prove us fallen as well as immortal. The many inventions which we seek out; the schemes, even where there is the light of revelation, for being ourselves the authors, either in whole or in part, of our own deliverance, these are continued evidences that we are the children of those who even in paradise planned their own exaltation and thought to be wiser than God. We imitate our forefather, resolving to be ourselves the architects of our greatness, and therefore building on the quicksand; neglecting as he did, the simple declarations of revelation, we take our own way of acquiring knowledge and learn it by being lost. Oh! for the spirit of St. Paul—"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I read the history of human transgression and ruin. I read it in the pages of Scripture; I read it in the throes and the convulsions of a disorganised world. I then turn to the record of redemption. I find that God has graciously taken into His own

hands the work of my salvation. I learn, that though fallen He is ready to exalt me; though corrupted, He is willing to purify, though worthy of condemnation, He offers me forgiveness and pardon. And I must be strangely bent on inventing for myself, if with every want thus satisfied, with every wish which I can form as a child of immortality more than accomplished, I seek elsewhere than in the work of redemption for the mode and the means of acceptance with God. If I must invent, let it be in methods that will show my devotedness and prove my sense of His unmerited compassion, and win my fellow-men to the faith of Christianity. There is wisdom in the old adage, that we should concern ourselves more as to how evil is to be removed from the world, than as to how it came in; and we need hardly say that the grand instrument for the extirpation of moral evil is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the faithful publication of the doctrines of this Gospel and the due administration of its ordinances, God is pleased to effect the restoration of that image of Himself which man had by creation and lost by transgression.

What, then, becomes us, if we do indeed lament the prevalence of evil, if we do indeed long for the reinstatement of the world in something of its original happiness—what becomes us but the giving all diligence to the diffusing around us the knowledge of Christ and of the redemption which He wrought out for mankind? Once admit this, and you admit the duty of strengthening, by every possible means, the church of Christ in this kingdom, increasing the number of its ministers, and supporting them in their desperate struggle with the vast masses of ignorance and wickedness by which they are surrounded. Of course, while speaking thus, I know, that, as a clergyman myself, I may seem to be only upholding mine own order, and magnifying mine own office. I do uphold that order, I do magnify that office. I know from Holy Writ that to that order hath God committed His Word and His sacraments, and with that office hath He been pleased to associate the translation of men “from darkness into marvellous light.” We have, indeed, “the treasure” only “in earthen vessels;” the “excellency of the power is of God,” not of us. Perish the thought which would arrogate anything to the minister himself; but if there be truth in the Bible, then it is by no philosophical apparatus, it is by no enlarged system of intellectual training, it is simply by “the truth as it is in Jesus,” diffused through the instrumentality of ordinary teachers and pastors, that society can be regenerated, vice kept down, and any approach made towards that predicted blessedness when all the families of the earth are to be united in one holy brotherhood. Alas! that practically this should have been lost sight of for so many years; our parishes having been suffered to multiply their populations from tens to hundreds, from hundreds to thousands, without any attempt at making the amount of pastoral superintendence keep pace with the augmenting and ever-growing demand. And now we reap the bitter fruits of our negligence; the population having vastly outstripped the means of religious instruction, there are crowded into the courts and alleys of our cities hordes of human beings, who, void of all fear and knowledge of God, can be viewed only with dread and apprehension by those who have to uphold order and property in the land, and with bitter sorrow and grief by those who know it to be written where no falsehood is inscribed, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” Can we do nothing in this emergency? Can we do nothing to grapple with the misery of our fellow-men? Yes; enlarge, multiply, strengthen the instrumentality which, as we have shown you, has been appointed by God for the moral renewal of the world. Do not wait for the building of churches; increase at once the number of clergymen. There is a great deal to be done before churches are built, as well as after. A long-neglected population is not to be reclaimed except by domestic ministrations. There must be visiting from house to house; there must be the carrying the lessons of the Bible to the cottage of the peasant, to the hovel of the beggar, to the workshop of the mechanic. Besides, there are young children to be at once taught, sick persons to be at once ministered to, and dissolute to be at once reclaimed. Wait not till more churches have been built; it is waiting till thousands more of immortal souls have perished. Increase the number of pastors—faithful, self-denying men, men who will set immediately to work upon the surrounding ignorance and wretchedness. ‘Well, then,’ you may say, ‘let the incumbents of crowded parishes secure the services of additional curates.’ Yes, let them; you could not suggest a more effectual measure; and when the church of England shall possess that fabled wealth which its enemies always talk of and its friends never find—when a vast number of our livings shall cease to be bare

subsistences, the scantier generally in proportion as the parish is larger and poorer, I doubt not that the incumbents will answer to the call; for already St. Paul might apply to them his own emphatic words, "To their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves."

In this dilemma, in this imperative call for additional help, and in this utter inability of the incumbents of hundreds of parishes to provide it for themselves, the Society for which I now plead steps forward and engages to support curates in impoverished and overgrown districts. But you will say, 'Can the clergy be found?' Oh! blessed and most hopeful sign, amidst much that is dark and disastrous! our country must still have the blessing of God, our church must still be His chosen and honoured instrument, when men start forward on all sides—men of education, men fitted by talent and acquirement for a high social position—ready to devote themselves, on a pittance which will scarce furnish the necessities of life, to the labouring, unnoticed except by God, among the wretched and the reckless, the depraved and the dissolute, the hardened and the famishing. The men, then, are ready. The Society has already supplied numbers; it is easy to supply numbers more; but it is almost bankrupt; in place of multiplying, it may be compelled to diminish its grants; it may have to withdraw curates from lonely and desolate places which are just beginning to show signs of moral improvement. It must bid the patient and zealous pastor abandon that school, where the young ones are making such progress; that poor old man, blinded by age, must miss the accustomed and heart-cheering visit; that dying woman, alas! the clergyman must cease to pray at her bed-side, and animate her with a hope full of immortality.

Not so; the thing is impossible. Great efforts will be made. This large and influential congregation will now set a noble example, and "the Society for Providing Additional Curates" will be extricated from its difficulties, and be supplied with means for advancing its labours. I ask for no ordinary liberality—I plead for no single parish; there are at least sixty districts—districts selected for their utter pauperism, districts scattered all over the country—sixty districts from which curates must be withdrawn at Easter—just six weeks hence—six short weeks—unless the Society's resources be greatly augmented. These are only what must immediately be given up; tens and hundreds more must rapidly follow. I really use no exaggerated language when I say, that were this Society to fail, a million of our countrymen must in a very great degree be suddenly deprived of pastoral superintendence—left, that is, "as sheep without a shepherd." Are you prepared for this? Impossible; you must earnestly desire to benefit these teeming crowds, too long neglected and now just beginning to appreciate the worth of Christian instruction. And there is no need, according to the language of our text, to "seek out inventions." The sure method of dealing with a depraved and disorganised world has been ascertained for us; it has not to be sought out—it has only to be brought to bear. We have fallen, and a ponderous curse rests like a mountain on our heads; but we need not continue under the terrible burden—we may rise up, our earthly sinews strung with more than earthly might, and fling it for ever away. The vast atonement of the Son, the renovating agency of the Spirit—these are promised to us in the Gospel. A new creation may spring from the ruins of the old, and the outcasts by birth become "sons by adoption." God grant unto all of us to "lay fast hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel;" and clinging to it ourselves we shall be eager to lead others to the same deliverance; and there needs but this eagerness, and every hand will be stretched out to aid a Society which, like that which I now finally commend to your support, labours to apply the machinery which God has ordained to the succour of thousands for whom Christ died.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JANUARY 14, 1849.

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn."—Matthew xiii. 30.

IN one of the elementary books of instruction used in our charity schools, there occurs this question—"What is a parable?" The answer given is—"An instructive story." This answer is correct; but it requires much care and attention to derive the proper and intended instruction from the story. There is danger of self-deception here. The story is in itself interesting and complete, but there is a risk that the reader will be content with the story without deriving instruction from its application, fancying that he knows all about it when he has got but the outward letter and illustration. The sort of instruction communicated by parables, while the simplest, is at the same time the most comprehensive. No one can construct an apposite parable without being master of his subject: he must see through it to the end, or else he cannot fit a parable to it for its illustration. Parables are, therefore, graceful and attractive condescensions from a first class teacher to meet the infirmities of his pupils and disciples. It is sufficiently remarkable, that the only Teacher, who was perfectly master of His whole subject, namely, Jesus Christ, was the chief speaker of parables.

The great subject of our Lord's parables was God's dealings with mankind in the matter of revealed religion. There are, however, subdivisions of this subject, which are treated in different parables. Sometimes the subject is a long historical range of the dealings of God with both Jews and Gentiles, as in the parable of the marriage feast. The Jews were invited first, but they refused to come; the servants were then sent out to invite others, who eventually came; and last of all the King came to receive the guests. Sometimes the subject is a particular crisis of those dealings, as in the parable of the ten virgins. The crisis is the second coming of the Lord Jesus. At midnight the cry went forth, "the Bridegroom cometh." Sometimes the subject is the comparative opportunities and gifts vouchsafed to the Lord's servants, with the issue of their responsible trial at His return; as is the case in the parable of the talents. Sometimes the subject is the extension of true religion through the nations of the earth, affording a rest to some of every nation; as in the parable of the mustard seed, which grew until the birds of the air built their nests in the branches. Sometimes the subject is the progress of true religion in an individual saint until it pervades him wholly—body, soul, and spirit—conforming him to his Lord and Master; as in the parable of the "leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened." And sometimes the subject is the mixture of true and false professors, during the entire history of the church and the world, till the coming of the Lord Jesus; and this is the subject of the parable from which my text is taken.

The parable before us is this. Before I read it, I wish you to notice, that with reference to all those subjects which I have enumerated, and perhaps a few more—for the enumeration does not, I apprehend, include all, though it

certainly does a large class—with reference to them all our Lord uses the same expression in commencing their illustration—"the kingdom of heaven," or the kingdom of God. This expression He uses indifferently, whatever may be the special subject of the parable. "The kingdom of heaven," we read, "is like a man who made a supper;" "the kingdom of heaven is like to ten virgins;" "the kingdom of heaven is like a nobleman, who went away and left his servants;" "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed;" "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven;" and now, "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." There is the "instructive story."

Now, in looking for the instruction to be derived from this story, we are assisted, in the first place, by the brief exposition of it given by our Lord himself, fixing, and of course infallibly, the right interpretation of the leading features of this parable. At the thirty-sixth verse you read—"Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." You will observe that we are now in the position of the disciples, and not of the multitude. We are not sent away before the exposition is given, but what kings and prophets desired but failed to see and hear, it is our privilege to see and hear; what was refused to the Jewish multitude is given to us. We are within "the house," and have the lot of the Lord's disciples, so far as privilege is concerned. "He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." That is the first step in the exposition. "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." How brief, how simple, how masterly, the exposition of the whole! "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire: so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

There is great instruction to be derived from this. It is our happiness to hear; it is our duty to hearken. Consider this parable, then; and that I may invite you in an orderly manner to derive instruction from it, I shall speak first of the "good seed;" then of "the tares;" next, of the servants of the household; fourthly, of the proposal of the servants to the master; and lastly, of the master's answer, which includes the words of the text, "Let both grow together until the harvest."

I shall consider first, then, "the good seed." The expression "good seed" here signifies persons. Christ says, they are "the children of the kingdom." While I tell you that the words signify persons, I wish to distinguish between what they mean here and what they mean in another parable. The "good seed" in the parable of the sower, signifies the Word of God. He who soweth it, is the Son of man. All true teaching is from Him. All who preach the Word of God truly, derive their power to do so from Him. In the parable, we see Him as the Head of the ministry—as the Head of a "mystical

body," or company of persons. "The good seed" here, then, signifies persons—"the children of the kingdom;" that is to say, those among mankind who are indeed converted to God—those who are no longer "conformed to this world," but "transformed by the renewing of their minds"—those, in short, who are "born again;" for "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." And these are "the children" of that "kingdom;" that is, of the kingdom in the sense in which it exists now upon earth. There is a reign of God now going on upon earth, contemporaneously with the reign of Satan; and there are persons influenced by each of these reigns. The persons influenced by the reign, or supremacy, of God, are "the good seed," the "children of the kingdom," whom St. Paul calls "children of light," "children of the day." They are persons who, to refer to what I said this morning, know what righteousness is. They are acquainted with the character of God as it is revealed in Christ; they are acquainted with the demands of God's law. They are no longer satisfied with what satisfies society with regard to religion; they look higher than the opinion of men, they look to what God says; they are, therefore, altogether removed from those false dependencies on which the men of the world are leaning for happiness hereafter, and are depending exclusively on Jesus Christ. These are "the children of the kingdom"—really spiritual, converted persons. Such there are in the world; such there have ever been, in every age.

Our attention is next to be called to "the tares." "The tares," says our Lord, "are the children of the wicked one;" and He further tells us that "the enemy that sowed them is the devil." Adam was planted wholly a "good seed;" but he ruined himself, and he did so at the instigation of the devil. The devil planted "the tares." He began at the fountain head; so that it seemed as if all the children of men must be "tares," being born in the likeness of their fallen father; and, but for the gracious interference of God, all would have been tares. That interference was not exercised for the first-born; he was allowed to illustrate the father's fall in his posterity; he "was of that wicked one." But that interference was exercised for the second-born, Abel. The mixture was manifested in the first family—Abel being one of the good seed, and Cain one of the bad. See how early was this gracious interference of God on behalf of man! This has gone on until the present time; and while God has mysteriously permitted "the enemy" to succeed up to a certain point, He has never allowed him to succeed altogether; He has never allowed him to fill the whole world with "tares;" always has He preserved some "wheat." For divers reasons He has allowed the enemy to succeed to a certain extent. Some of those reasons we are allowed to look into; of others He gives us no account; and He invites us to trust in Him, promising that if we do so, we shall know more hereafter. But "the tares" are the unconverted men of this world, "the children of the devil." When we thus speak of them, we have no wish to charge them with all manner of iniquities. That is not at all necessary for our purpose. There are vast varieties among them; some are openly vicious—some are openly criminal—some are neither the one nor the other, but amiable and excellent, moral and respectable. Still, not being "born again," they are children of the devil; for there is no third class among mankind; there is no third growth in the field—it is entirely occupied with "the good seed" and "the tares." There is no neutral ground, there are no cross-benches; he that is not with Christ is against Him; He that gathereth not with Him scatters. None are neutral, none negative; all who are not "children of the kingdom," are "children of the wicked one;" for the separation is perfect, while the mixture is evident.

Our attention is next to be called to the "servants of the household." These appear on the face of the narrative to be a distinct class, but the distinction is official, not in character; they are all themselves either "children of the devil" or "children of the kingdom," but they are called to a special

office. The "servants of the household" are those peculiarly employed by the "Son of Man" in the "field;" they are the ministers of the Gospel. There has always been a class set apart for the ministry, officially, though not characteristically, distinct from all the rest of mankind. Under the Jewish dispensation and church, that class was hereditary. A particular tribe was appointed, a particular family, and the "servants of the household" were sons after fathers from generation to generation. Under the Christian dispensation the case is different. The "servants of the household" are not confined to any family or tribe or kingdom, but by the laying on of hands and prayer, instituted by the Lord and continued by His apostles unto this day, they are separated from their brethren by appointment to an office; they are not separated, as I said before, in character, for they are like their brethren, but they are separated in office for a special purpose and calling of God. There are "the servants of the household."

Then comes the proposal of these servants. Grieved to see the mixture in the field, anxious for the honour and glory of their Master, and to have a field manifesting careful cultivation, they propose to Him to go and take away the tares. "Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up?" This was the proposal of well-intended zeal, but such zeal was short-sighted. Had the design of the great Proprietor included nothing more than the cultivating of a crop of wheat, which should grow under the most favourable circumstances, without anything to try its strength, or anything to separate it from the tares; had it been confined to this one point, then there might have been some reason in the proposal of the servants. The proprietor's design was, however, much larger than this; He designed not only that there should be good seed in the field, but that it should be tried by the contiguity of the tares, that it should grow in defiance of the trial, nay, that it should grow stronger because of the trial, and that glory should accrue to Himself at last from the separation of the two, from the triumph of the good seed and the burning of the bad. All this, I say, was included in His design, and therefore He rebukes the short-sighted proposal of His servants. 'Nay, He says, 'do not attempt to remove them, lest in so doing you root up the wheat also. You are not competent to make the separation. "Let both grow together until the harvest." A separation there shall be when the harvest is come, but you are not fitted to make it. Let them alone; let them both grow together.'

The mention of the harvest leads the proprietor to say what He will do when the harvest comes. "In the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn."

Here, then, we have derived a little more instruction, I hope, from this story; but we must examine it a little further, and ask ourselves what are the lessons which the parable so opened impresses upon our minds. Meditating upon this parable, I can derive from it, I think, two lessons for the ministers of Christ and two for the people composing the churches.

First, I derive from the parable the lesson that the "servants" have to announce this mixture. We see it and proclaim it. We tell you that everywhere there is such a mixture,—it is a part of the arrangements of our Lord. We look abroad upon the field, and, seeing the mixture, it behoves us to proclaim it: we proclaim it for a warning to the tares, we proclaim it for the encouragement of the "good seed." The "children of the kingdom" find themselves assailed in various ways, continually annoyed by what is ungenial to them. How shall this be explained to them unless they are plainly told: "You are not at home; the field is not heaven, the field is the world. You are still living in the world surrounded by enemies. Do not expect to be at ease; the time for ease is not yet come. These tares are left among you for one especial purpose, namely, to try you." Every part of a minister's duty connects itself with truth. If it be our duty to tell you anything, it is because

it is for your good to hear it, for your satisfaction to know it. Some of you who are "children of the kingdom" may be suffering exceedingly from the "children of the wicked one" whom Providence has placed near you. There may be "children of the wicked one" in your own family, in your own household. Some of your own dear children, around whom your hearts are entwined by all the tenderest affections of Christian love, and for whom you are sending up prayers to God day and night, may be manifestly "children of the wicked one;" I say not openly or grossly so, but carelessly so, worldlyly so, too plainly and painfully so for your own hearts. Now this is no accident; it belongs to your position in the field. There must be "children of the wicked one;" there is no power in man to cleanse the field either by turning all the tares into good seed or by rooting them out. You must take things as God has given them to you, and you must not murmur because they are not as you would have them. You must quiet yourselves under the state of things in the midst of which you are at present living, even as a child is quieted; and while you continue to offer up your earnest prayers to God on behalf of the tares, you must not be discontented or fretful or uneasy within yourselves, neither must you allow the fact that the mixture still continues, to interfere with your thankfulness to God for the blessings which you enjoy. You must not allow this feature in God's dealings to poison all the other ingredients which are put into your cup; you must learn to give Him thanks even when there is some bitterness in the draught, and, knowing that this mixture is of God's appointment, you must submit to it without murmuring or dissatisfaction. I say not that you must refrain from asking for blessings on behalf of unconverted persons, but while you earnestly and repeatedly do so, it must be with submission to His will; and if the mixture continue even among those who are dearest to you, you are instructed that it is His arrangement. It was so in the first family; it was so with the two first brothers: can you wonder that it should be so with you? We are, then, to tell of this mixture. This is one of the lessons which I learn from the parable, that "the servants of the household" are to tell of the mixture, so that all may rank themselves, as far as they can, on the one side or on the other.

Another lesson which I derive from the parable is this: that we are not to presume to constitute ourselves judges as to who are Christians and who are not. We are not competent to individualize, as it were, the separation, and to say that some of you are "children of the kingdom," and some of you (individually speaking, I mean,) are "children of the wicked one;" while we are bound to recognise and declare that such a mixture does exist, we are warned not to presume to make ourselves judges, or to dare to take upon ourselves to make the separation. We must not presume to say who amongst you are to be admitted to the Lord's table and who are not; we are not to take upon ourselves to decide who are to be received at the baptismal font, when presenting an infant for baptism, and who are not; who have faith, and who have not. We are not competent, I say, to judge of this. Attempts to do so may be wrong on either side, or on both sides. "Let both grow together until the harvest." Now here is an important lesson for ministers of the church to learn. Our communion is open upon the high authority of the words of this text: "Let both grow together." I dare not summon the candidates for communion to a private examination, and then tell some that they are and others that they are not Christians. I cannot presume to separate the tares from the wheat. God forbid. The ministers of the church are not competent to perform such a task. I know it is the proposal of great and well-intended zeal to do this. It was the proposal of the servants. "Lord, shall we go and separate them?" "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." I would not incur the risk of rejecting one servant of the Lord, and therefore I must not attempt to make the separation. But if this

be so, how, it may be asked, can there be anything like church discipline? Now, my dear brethren, there may be a measure of this discipline, and it is the province of judgment and discretion to observe this. There is a certain measure of church discipline inculcated in the Scriptures. For example, if there be an open offender, a person whose conduct scandalises the church, the members are positively commanded by the apostles to separate such a wicked one from them. If there were an open crime; if, for example, a party were living in a state of incest; this was no matter for conjecture, no matter of private opinion on the part of the minister. Here, at least, there was not the presumption of reading a man's heart; here was an open scandal. In such a case we have no choice; we are bound to separate; we are bound to interpose between the ordinances of God and the wicked person, and to warn such a person not to presume to come to the Lord's table. If we know any person who is living in open sin, it is no longer matter of presumption to separate from him; no one can turn round upon us and say, "You are pretending to read the man's heart." We should reply, "No, it is not the man's heart, but his life, that we read." If a man be living in a state of adultery; if we know that he is living with a woman as though she were his wife, when in fact she is not his wife; where is the presumption of judging in such a case as that? We look at the man's actions: he has made himself amenable to our observation, and therefore we are bound to put away such a wicked person. We are instructed by our own church, that if we know of two persons who are living in enmity—if we know that they are living on bad terms, so that they do not speak to one another, it is our duty to admonish them and to tell them, that while such a state of things exists, we cannot receive them at the Lord's Table. But this is not judging their hearts at all; this is not presuming, it is only acting on outward evidence which they have forced upon our observation.

Here, then, is the extent to which church discipline may be applied. It is when by outward actions, the proofs of which force themselves on the observation, religion is outraged and violated, that man may interpose, and, on the strength of this text and others, separate the party from communion. But, generally—and it is a general outline which is given in the parable—with reference to the great mass of the tares in the field, the great mass of those concerning whom we cannot but fear that they are unconverted; as they do not violate the outward moralities of life, as they bear some little resemblance to the wheat, as they walk respectably so far as man sees them, it is the bounden duty of "the servants of the household" to "let them grow together," not presuming to separate them.

Here, then, is the second lesson for ministers. And now, my brethren, there are lessons for you to learn. One very important lesson is this, that the circumstance of your being received by Christian pastors at the Lord's Table is no proof at all of your being a Christian. One of the great risks incurred where a minister presumes to judge who is fit to come to the table and who is not, is that the people, or some of them, will be quite satisfied with their own Christianity because their minister is so—that they will account it a sort of patent of the sincerity and truth of their religion that they have passed muster in a private examination by the pastor. He thinks well of them, he admits them to the table, and they may actually consider his approbation as a proof of their Christianity. Now this is an awful danger. The fact of your being admitted to the table here; the fact that we allow you to "grow together," to come together in the ordinances of worship, is no proof at all that you are Christians. You must look for proofs elsewhere; you must seek them in something of more consequence than this. So that, you see, our open communion is no flattering thing at all, nor must you regard me or any other pastor as judging what is your spiritual state. It is extraordinary how extremes meet. Those pastors of the close communion churches who undertake to determine who in their congregations

shall be received, and who shall not be received, at the Lord's table, actually introduce a sort of vicarious religion, judging for others as if they were infallible, or at least running the risk of leading others to depend on them. This is the sin of the great apostacy, in which the minister carries on a vicarious religion for the people, and the people put their confidence in the priest. See how clear our own church keeps from both of these extremes. We do not presume to deny you the table unless you violate outward morality; and when we hear of that, we warn you and tell you that you are not in a condition to communicate at the Lord's table. But though you do come, we give you no pass: we give you no encouragement whatever on that ground to conclude that you are Christians; because we admit all sorts, and "let them grow together," as we conceive it to be our duty to do, "till the harvest." "Let both grow together till the harvest."

It is, therefore, incumbent on you to seek to ascertain on other grounds to which of the two classes here presented you belong. The inquiry is urgent, because the separation is sure; the separation may be near; it must be final. It is sure; for the Lord hath said it. "The harvest is the end of the world." It is coming: who can tell when it shall come? "The reapers are the angels." The Lord himself shall "come with ten thousand angels." These angels are ready, and fitted to perform the high behests of Jehovah; they are every way competent. They are enemies of the wicked one: they know what it is to contend with the devil and his angels; they know what it is to contend with his servants here upon earth. And, as they are enemies of the wicked, so are they attached and faithful friends of the saints. There is joy among them when one repents; there is joy among them when one submits to God, when he pleads and weeps, and rejoices and believes, and sings. They are, then, competent to execute the high task assigned to them. The Lord Jesus will tell them, as He says, first to "gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them." What a remarkable phrase is this—"bind them in bundles!" I know it is possible to be too curious in the application of parables; I know it is possible to carry parables too far, and to strain them, and I would not therefore ground any important doctrine upon a particular expression in the parable before us; but when without originating any doctrine we corroborate what was previously true and may be proved by other means, are we going too far? Now I have thought about this expression "bind them in bundles." I have considered what would be likely to add to the anguish of the children of this world when they are "cast into outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth;" and I have thought if, men who have transgressed alike whose modes of serving the devil have been the same, are bound together, how must they hate one another! Imagine a bundle of atheists, each loathing all the rest, and all crying in agony "there is a God!" If it be possible to fancy aggravation in hell, it would be for such a bundle to be kept together. A bundle of sensualists, without one drop of water to put on their burning tongues! A bundle of persecutors, finding that God has made inquisition for blood and that their iniquity has fallen upon their own heads! A bundle of hypocrites, who now find that God is what He said He was, and whose hope of escaping punishment while they deceive their fellows is banished for ever. Oh! imagine, in that awful scene where there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," imagine those bundles. Imagine those spirits of, as it were, congenial iniquity, but that congeniality turned into torment; that which would have been some little mitigation of sorrow while they were upon earth, that which would have helped them to encourage one another before the hour of trial, now, after the trial, turned into gall and bitterness, and made a source of increased anguish throughout eternity! Think of bundles of burning tares! Ah! my friends, remember that all who are not

really children of the kingdom will be found among the tares. To what bundle will you belong? Here are thoughtless, giddy, worldly creatures, taken up with the things of time and sense, and passing through the world without any thought of God! Oh! what a bundle of such there will be! How will they reproach one another! how will each reproach himself and herself! and how, if any of you who may be so characterised, continue so and die so, how will you execrate to all eternity the remembrance of such a day as this, while there was yet time to turn, and you refused to be convinced, and thus aggravated your ruin! The recollection of such a day as this will be like fresh fuel in the fire, to every man who hears and is not subdued to the truth of the Word of God. Take heed, I entreat you, my dear brethren. But then—"then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father." How? We shall ascend in the image of Christ Himself, who is the Sun of righteousness. When He was transfigured, He shone as the sun; and every one of you shall then be transformed into His perfect likeness, reflecting back His image in body as well as in spirit. Our "vile bodies" shall be "fashioned" after the likeness of "His glorious body, according to the working whereby He subdues all things to Himself." What a light shall be there! Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, each shining as the sun, and Jesus Christ shining gloriously above all! "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun." How wide will be the separation then! Then "the children of the wicked one" shall not stand side by side with "the children of the kingdom." The separation shall be as wide as that between the blackness of darkness and the disc of the sun, as wide as that between God and Satan. Some who are in this world sitting together, working together, reading together, engaged in the same pursuits together, family or domestic, shall be separated then as widely as are darkness and light. "Let both grow together," says our Lord, "till the harvest." Yes, whatever our feelings, whatever our judgments may be with respect to the time of the harvest—and we dare not presume to say when it will actually arrive—we know that the time is coming, and that come it will. "Let both grow together till the harvest."

Search, then, and examine yourselves. "The matter rests with you." "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." Look at the descriptions of "the children of the wicked one," and range yourselves; I do not presume to class you: look at the descriptions of "the children of the kingdom;" and if you want to discover what they are, you can only do so in the sacred Word of God. Fall down on your knees, my brethren, and ask God to change your hearts. Remember that all "the children of the kingdom" were once "tares," once "children of the wicked one." "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us; even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved." If God hath quickened some, He can also quicken others. All the children of the kingdom were once tares. There is hope, then, for the tares; if they would pray and submit to God in time, they might become His children. Watch and pray that you may be saved. Be in earnest. The thing chiefly to be deprecated is carelessness. Let not any of you go on as if all were right, and you had nothing to care about. Become Christians, and you will assuredly be happy, whatever you may meet with in this world. Give up carelessness, and earnestly set about the matter of the salvation of your souls. May God in His mercy prosper you in this work and bring it to a happy conclusion, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

GOOD THINGS TO COME.

The Jubilee Sermon

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

PREACHED BY

THE MOST REV. JOHN BIRD SUMNER, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, ON THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1849,

It being the Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Society.

"They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."—Jeremiah xxxi. 34.

"ALL shall know Me, saith the Lord." A spirit-stirring promise this, my brethren! A blessed season is here spoken of, very unlike what the world has hitherto seen. Making due allowance for the Eastern style, and for the character of the prophetic writings, which do not always justify a literal interpretation, still a state of things is described in this passage which the world has never witnessed on any large or extensive scale. It may have been witnessed in a family—it has existed, perhaps, in a small community of families, but it has never been realised as the religious state of a nation. For we must observe, that to "know the Lord," as the prophet employs the phrase, is no ordinary, no superficial, no speculative knowledge of God, such as may prevail in any land, which is not altogether heathen. It is not merely to acknowledge the existence of a Creator; for this the Jews acknowledged, when the promise of the text, as a future blessing, was made by Jeremiah. Nay, it is more than to be acquainted with the nature and attributes of God; for these also had been revealed to the Jews, whom the prophet was addressing. It is even more than to confess the Scriptures to be His Word, and to pay Him ceremonial worship; for this, too, did the Jews who are here rebuked, and this, too, did those of their descendants afterwards, of whom our Lord declared that they knew not God: "Ye say that He is your God; yet have ye not known Him." More, then, than to know that God is—more than to possess a revelation of His Word and attributes—more than to appear before Him in the outward worship of the sanctuary,—more than this is meant, when it is promised that "all shall know Me, from the least unto the greatest."

Such acquaintance with God is meant, as brings the power, the justice, the mercy, the holiness of God before the mind, and applies them so closely to the heart, that it may be ruled and actuated by that knowledge. To "know the Lord," in the scriptural sense, is to have the inward witness of His majesty, the consciousness of our relation to Him as our Maker, our Governor, our

Judge ; such consciousness as shall lead us to love, and honour, and reverence, and obey Him—such as Enoch had, when (as we are told) he “walked with God,” set God before him as the ruler of his life—such as Abraham had, when he departed from his country, as the Lord had spoken unto him, not knowing whither he went, but knowing that God had called him, and not doubting that wherever He had called, it was good to follow. It was a true knowledge of God in Joseph, when he repressed the motions of sin, and restrained himself in the hour of temptation ; it was a true knowledge of God in the aged Eli, when he submitted to the Divine will, though exercised against himself, and exclaimed, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.” A like knowledge of God prevails in the psalms of David—a knowledge of His majesty, a knowledge of His mercy, a knowledge of His holiness ; and there we find that king sometimes bending before Him in deep contrition, sometimes breaking forth in strains of thankfulness and joy, but always relying upon Him simply and confidently for temporal and spiritual blessings. In the language of Scripture, this is to “know the Lord.” And if it is this, and nothing less than this, then may we too justly say, The time is not come, of which the prophet speaks, when “all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest, saith the Lord.” And it were a vain speculation to inquire when it shall be. These are among “the times and the seasons, which God hath reserved in His own power.”

But it is not a vain speculation, and by God’s blessing it may prove “good to the use of edifying,” if we inquire *how* it might be—how this blessed consummation may be obtained, and the promise brought to its fulfilment. The inquiry seems suited to the occasion, since the result which it contemplates has been for 150 years the object of that venerable Society which we are to-day delighting to honour. More especially will it be no unprofitable inquiry, if it shall appear that you yourselves, my brethren, are much concerned in it—that every one present has a duty respecting it, and may be, in part, the blessed instrument of God in accomplishing His will.

Looking, then, at the fulfilment of the prophecy, I first observe, that we have no ground for expecting that “all will know the Lord,” because mankind will bring another nature into the world—a nature which of its own accord shall turn towards God and righteousness. We have no reason to believe that the natural state and condition of man will ever be different from that which it became when Adam by transgression lost the Divine image in which he was created. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and the time will never cease, when they who are taught of God to understand themselves will be forced to confess—“I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh, my original nature,) dwelleth no good thing.” We must not, then, wait for the time when “all shall know the Lord” by nature.

Neither have we any right to expect, that they shall know Him by any fresh, or more general revelation. This was not needed even by the Jews, to whom the promise was addressed. Our Lord declared, that the knowledge of God was sufficiently within their reach, if their hearts had not been closed against it. “They had Moses and the prophets—let them hear them ;” they would teach them to “know the Lord.” How much more, then, is it true of those on whom the Sun of righteousness has risen—“the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person,” in whom dwelleth “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily !” “He that hath seen Him, hath seen the

Father." "If they know the Son, they would know the Father also." Yes, all may "know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."

It is not, therefore, by a fresh revelation of Himself on the part of God, neither is it by altering the condition of man's fallen nature, that we are warranted to expect the accomplishment of the prophet's words. I grant that this is our first impression. Our first thought, when we turn our minds to the contemplation of such a promise, is the thought of a different dispensation from that under which we live—of some new interposition from heaven, by which the power of Satan should be effectually restrained, and the affections of men withdrawn from things below and raised to things above. St. Paul has forbidden this idea, by seizing on the prophet's words and applying them expressly to the Gospel, which he was himself employed to proclaim. He excites his countrymen to "walk worthy" of their high calling, by raising their expectations to the fulfilment of this very promise, as a part of that "better covenant" which they had themselves embraced. Even to them is the assurance given, that God would put His laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts—that He should be to them a God, and they to Him a people; that they should "no more teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all should know Him, from the least to the greatest." The agency, therefore, to which we are to look for the accomplishment of the prophecy, is no other than that from which whatever is good in man has been derived from the beginning. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the God and Father of lights." If the patriarchs served God "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation"—if Enoch and Abraham were governed by His laws—it was because His Spirit wrote them in their hearts; if they possessed the knowledge of God, it was because that knowledge was implanted in them by His Spirit. And so, when "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest," it will be the same Spirit which worketh all in all.

But "there are diversities of gifts, though the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, though the same Lord;" and there are differences of results, even in the same administration. It is in the spiritual husbandry, as it is in the culture of the ground: the same seed and the same tillage do not always produce the same harvest. There are seasons when men "sow much and bring in little," "look for much and it comes to little." And why? "I did blow upon it, saith the Lord of Hosts." "I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereon it rained not withered." And so, when it pleases God to accomplish the promise of the text, the breath which He sends forth will be not the blighting, but the genial breath; and the rain will fall—"the early and the latter rain"—and never be withholden. The means producing the abundant harvest will be no new means; the Spirit will "take of the things of God," and write them in the heart by the instrumentality already in operation; the difference will be, that the instrumentality will be, first, universal, and secondly, more successful.

It will be more universal. "All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest;" from the youngest to the eldest, from the richest to the poorest. All, therefore, shall know Him from their youth; all shall be "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord;" this shall be

no longer needful. And why is it needful now? Partly, and for a first reason, because too many grow up without that knowledge; and they who from their years and experience in earthly things ought to be teachers in spiritual wisdom, are often children in real understanding. The minister who surveys the people entrusted to his charge, finds that instead of building them up in the faith, he has to lay the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. The Christian inquirer, when he surveys the spiritual condition of the district in which he lives, finds it still in that elementary state of which the prophet speaks, where every man must "teach his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord." And how, brethren, can it be otherwise? For I have shown what it is, in a scriptural sense, to have that knowledge; and how many pass from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood, and are never taught its earliest rudiments! In the more favoured classes of the community, no doubt, children are commonly instructed to "believe that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him;" that elementary instruction is given, which must be the foundation of the whole; and we do not undervalue such an advantage—it is great every way. But how few are led on, beyond the elementary knowledge of the head, to that mature and perfect knowledge which is seated in the heart! How seldom are the articles of the Creed or Catechism transferred from the memory to the life and conscience! How few are accustomed to hear the knowledge of God treated as if it were "the one thing needful" to be acquired, and "the one thing needful" to be retained! Who would suppose, from the general style of education, that to be ignorant of all things else is of trifling consequence, compared to ignorance of God; that to be wise in all things else is foolishness, if men are still without that knowledge! How few parents use this language to their children—"Seek knowledge, acquire learning; but first learn to know the Lord!"—"the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and the knowledge of Him, that is understanding." No wonder, then, that the impression made upon their tender minds, in regard to the God in whom they have their being, is like the footprint in the sand, washed away by the first wave of temptation, and quickly obliterated by the daily inroads of the world.

But there are other classes, of which the larger part of human society must ever be composed. Shall we, then, leave the rich—reverse the prophet's course, and now betake ourselves to the poor? Do they "know the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God?" Alas! they have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bands. I need not be diffuse on this; it is too clear to every one's observation. Multitudes spring up from youth to manhood, with no more knowledge of the Lord than they might have possessed if the Lord had not revealed Himself to the world. If they hear His name, it is to hear it blasphemed; if they learn that the Lord has spoken to men, it is to learn that His message is despised.

Whenever, then, the destined time shall arrive, when "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest," all "from the least to the greatest," will be nurtured in the faith and fear of God. Christian instruction will be universal. Now it is rare—now it is partial—now it is imperfect, and marred by inconsistency; then it will be general and complete. Those parents will not be the exception, but the rule, who say, "My son, know thou the God of thy father;" those fathers will not be the exception, but the rule, who like Abraham command their children and their household after them, that they keep

the commandments of God ; those mothers will not be the exception, but the rule, who bring their infant to baptism in a spirit like that of the mother of Samuel, and devote him to God saying, "As long as he liveth, he shall be lent unto the Lord." To "know the Holy Scriptures from a child," to fear the Lord, to remember the Creator, from the days of youth, will be a general description, and no longer the privilege and distinction of a few.

But further, Christian instruction, as it will be universal, so also it will be efficient and successful. I say not that it is unsuccessful now ; I believe that it is greatly honoured of God, and that they bring a false report of the land of promise, who reproach it as vain and unprofitable ; but its effect is now impeded by so many hindrances. Its rarity is a hindrance. Those who have been taught to "know the Lord," are encompassed on every side by those who know Him not. Take the most favoured case ;—the child who has hitherto "sat beside the still waters," and drank of the pure fountain of piety and holiness, must soon be launched on the wide ocean of the world—must take his course among those who have gone with the stream of the multitude, and are guided by no scriptural direction ; the parent who has sown good seed in his son's heart, and prays for its growth and fruitfulness, looks round after a while, and sees (we trust he sees) the wheat appearing—but he cannot help seeing that it is surrounded by tares, and how must he fear lest the tares should prevail and overspread it ! In proportion, therefore, as education in Divine knowledge will become general, we may believe that it will become effective and permanently influential. We now experience that the nature of evil is to be diffusive—that the nature of good is diffusive also ; and the time might arrive, when intercourse with others, instead of being dreaded for corruption, might be desired for edification ;—all might be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord, so as to grow up with a sense of His holiness, with no desire of offending Him to whom as infants they had been solemnly dedicated—the inestimable blessing of being at peace with Him, through "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Every day might be considered as a day that would tell, for gain or for loss, upon eternity. And then the young might meet together, not to tempt and be tempted, but to benefit and be benefited ; not to encourage one another in forgetfulness of God, but in acquaintance with Him. The object of social intercourse might not be to discover new modes of worldly pleasure—new modes of vanity, by which God should be banished from the mind—but to strengthen impressions which, through the frailty of our nature, are too easily effaced, and to fix the eye more clearly and more deeply upon the heart.

Brethren, it is delightful to contemplate such a picture, even in a vision. It is to see the "rivers spring up in dry places ;" it is to see the trees "flourish by the watercourses ;" it is to see "the wilderness blossom as the rose." And do not say, "Who shall live when God doeth this ?" Rather, let me apply what has been said to a practical purpose—to show your own concern in it.

We have first seen what it is to "know the Lord ;" we have next inquired how it might be brought to pass, that "all, from the least to the greatest," should "know the Lord ;" and as the instrumentality by which this might be achieved, is no new or unforeseen instrumentality, but the right and general use of means which we do enjoy,—so, neither must we wait for new instruments or agents to bring it into effect. Though all that is heavenly must come from heaven, all that is spiritual be derived from the Spirit of God, yet we

are not to wait for a certain season, till an angel shall descend, to make that pure which is now corrupt, that salutary which is now pernicious ; we have a business of our own, a work which God hath given us to do. If each one in his own household, and each one in his own neighbourhood, made this their chief and earnest care, that those in whom they are interested and by whom they are surrounded should know the Lord from their youth, the prophet's words might be fulfilled, and the whole community become one well-ordered family, "walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;" "all, from the least to the greatest," might be taught of God, blessing the pious endeavours of His people, and giving effect to the means which, in dependence on His grace, they would employ ; all might "walk with God," as Enoch—might trust in Him, as Abraham—might fear Him, as Joseph—might submit to Him, as Eli—might set Him before their eyes, as David—so that, "living and dying, they might be the Lord's."

And "can these things be?" "O Lord God, Thou knowest." Under Thy blessing, nothing more is needed to realise them, than the mutual cooperation of "all who profess and call themselves Christians;" nothing more, I might say, than a practice consistent with their profession. Nothing more is needed, than that that spirit should be universal, which 150 years ago animated the founders of "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." In an age of licence and profaneness, when men "regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of His hands," the spirit of these good men—they were but five—was stirred within them, when they saw their countrymen wholly given to the idols which they had set up in their hearts, whilst God was neglected and forgotten. They formed a holy union, "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" they invited all men to "search the Scriptures;" they placed them in their hands; they sent forth such warnings, such exhortations, agreeable to Scripture, as might bring men to reflection, and teach them to "consider their ways." They said "each man to his neighbour and each man to his brother, Know the Lord;" they said to the thoughtless world around them—"What meanest thou, O sleeper, that thou sleepest? Arise, and call upon thy God." "Awake, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Brethren, we dare not number the souls which, by the blessing attendant on these means of grace, have been brought "from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God." We cannot calculate the blind eyes which have been opened, the contrite hearts which have been healed, the prisoners which have been set free from sin, by the friends of this Society. But there are books in which all these names are written; and though sealed up now, unread by human eyes, the time will come "when every man's work shall be made manifest;" when every word of warning which has reclaimed the sinner, every word of consolation which has soothed the penitent, every word of instruction by which God's people have been edified, shall be recognized by Him whose glory it was intended to promote, and the gracious promise shall be fulfilled—"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

Brethren, it is a glorious object to carry out the purposes for which the Son of God became the Son of Man—glorious to give effect to the sacrifice of the cross, by bringing man to God, first to humble himself before Him, then to be "exalted in due time." He bestows the privilege upon His people, that they

are the instruments in this great and holy work ; and the Society which we commemorate, is entitled to our grateful veneration, in that it led the way, and set the first example, of considering the spiritual welfare of the multitude, and providing, according to its power, that "all should know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."

But I must remind you, in conclusion, that the duty is an individual duty, common to all, incumbent upon all who belong to the "chosen generation," the "royal priesthood," the "holy nation." Every individual in the Christian church is bound, by the faith which he professes, to promote the knowledge of "God, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

Let every one, then, go home and ask themselves what they have done, what they can do, towards advancing this great object. It may not be granted them to make an impression upon the world ; to influence a nation may not be given them ; but they may influence an individual,—and every individual brought to know the Lord is an approach towards the prophetic promise. Individuals are united in a family, and every family which is brought to live in the faith and fear of God advances the fulfilment of prophecy ; families are joined together in parishes, and every family in which this object is more or less attained, is a fresh approximation towards the prophecy ; and the complete fulfilment of the prophecy would be "nigh, even at the door," were every individual among us to do what in him lies to enlighten heathen ignorance and to advance Christian knowledge. God has been pleased, in this our day, to show by a few remarkable instances what a single Christian may effect, through exertions which His Spirit alone has aided. He has been pleased to exhibit the power of zeal, inspired by faith, to perform moral wonders and achieve apparent impossibilities. We can surely suppose the case, that many hearts should be enlightened by the same faith and animated by the same zeal, which has already been enkindled and has shone so brightly in a few. And if a few have done so much, what might not be accomplished by the many ? Yes, brethren, even that might be accomplished, which the prophet encourages us to desire, to pray for, and to attempt, when the earth should be "filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ;"—which may He who alone has it in His power to cause either "to will or to do of His good pleasure," grant in His good time, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

RELIGIOUS DELUSION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. D. G. WAIT, LL.D.,

Rector of Blagdon.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF BLAGDON, SOMERSETSHIRE,

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 18, 1849.*

"I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in My name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbour."—Jeremiah xxiii. 25—27.

THE outward actions are not always indications of the real intentions, and the studied appearance of religion does not always denote its possession. Enthusiasts generally wander from common sense; but the Scriptures by invariably harmonising with it present us with a rule of judgment, by which all extraordinary pretensions must be decided. If they endure not the ordeal of that "law" and that † "testimony," they are nothing worth. The Scriptures in their sublimity exhibit testimonials, that they proceeded from God, the glorious Fountain of intelligence; in their records and instructions they show Him to be allwise; in their adaptation to our various necessities they prove Him to be all-provident and all-gracious. He—the Giver—shines in the light of His uncreated mind; they—the gift—reflect upon us the beams of its goodness. Thus, although the Almighty Giver remains revealed in the awe of His unapproachable majesty, He more mildly shines in His gift with lovingkindness to man. As *there* the grace and truth of the only begotten Son are revealed, with mercy and peace embracing each other, before the lustre of His redemption our sins should pass away, as dark shadows, not fitted to endure the rays of the Sun of righteousness.

Omniscience is one of the essential attributes of God; and He never designed reason to be separated from religion. He intended not, that reason should presume to dispute the authority of His Holy Word; but He desired, that we "should ‡ *prove* all things, and hold fast that which is good." We cannot indeed "by searching find Him § out unto perfection;" but the || meditations of our hearts may be with *understanding*. Whilst He is enthroned over our consciences, the fear and godly reverence, which He requires from us, should be accompanied with the fullest exercise of our mental powers. Throughout the ancient Scriptures the true religion is identified with wisdom; but impiety

* This Sermon was preached to counteract the mischief caused by a female pretender to trances and miracles. Its particular allusions are explicable by the nature of her imposture and blasphemies, and by the proselytizing intrusions of herself and other females into Blagdon and the neighbouring parishes, for the purpose of detaching the people from their respective churches.

† Isaiah viii. 20.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 21. δοκιμάζετε—diligently examine—submit to the scriptural test.

§ Job xi. 7.

|| Psalm xlix. 3.

and idolatry with *folly*. So when God demands our hearts, He does not demand their extravagant impulses, but He desires that discretion * should preserve them, and that understanding should keep them; He desires † that the glory due to His name should be given to Him, and that in every respect the service rendered to Him should be ‡ *rational*.

The universe declares God's dignity by its attestations to His omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience; and the Scriptures by impressing on us, that He is in heaven, and that *we* are on earth, teach us to approach Him with awe, and to fear a profane familiarity with His Majesty. His Word brings His glory near to us, and causes it to pass before us in the reflection of His holiness and goodness, of His justice, of His mercy, and of His truth; but that Word may not be the subject of additions or diminutions. If God gives to us the encouragement of a reconciled Father, we must not presume upon it.

There were visible manifestations of the Deity in the first ages; and "holy men § of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But the veil of the Eternal has never been drawn aside to indulge the prying of the presumptuous:—the fleshly mind never has been able to roll it back; into the secrets, which the Almighty has not thought proper to reveal, none may intrude themselves. The age of miracles has passed;—prophecy is sealed; but the denunciations of God || against the lying prophet stand on record for the consideration of all, who use His name deceptively. The man of sin will ever be detected in his garb of self-righteousness; the lie in the ¶ right hand will ever be discovered. But firmly stands the truth of God:—before it the world dwindles to an atom, and all inferior subjects lose their value; and by it we must be judged. That truth commands us for the same reason not to ** "believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. It commands us to "take heed †† to what we hear," and "not to pay the sacrifice ‡‡ of fools." It convinces us, that however God may accommodate Himself to our comprehensions, He never descends to things which are below His exalted nature, and that He is not the author of anything that contradicts the Scriptures. His revelations therefore, which are not uselessly and lavishly made, must be consistent with His nature: they must have a wise object, and they must bear a relation to the principles of His government. Yet, age after age produces its delusions. Scarcely had the memory of that blasphemous ventriloquist, George Lukins, §§ of Yatton, passed away from this country, ere some few years since a pretender to prophecy arose at Berrow, disturbing the neighbouring parishes, and now a shameful imposture is intruded upon ourselves. "*Itching ||| ears*" receive the fables; and God's holy name is degraded, in proportion as the people turn aside to folly. Yet, ask yourselves,—if the Bible indulges not an idle and prurient curiosity respecting things wisely concealed from man,—are *they* to be believed, who pretend to gratify it?—"if the blind lead the blind," the consequence has been foretold. Superstition has existed immemorially; it is

* Prov. ii. 11.

† Psalm xxix. 2.

‡ λογική—Romans xii. 1.

§ 2 Peter i. 21.

|| Deut. xiii. 1—6; xviii. 20—22. Jerem. xiv. 14—16. Ezek. xiii. 3, 9. Micah iii. 5, 6, 12.

¶ Isaiah xlv. 20.

** 1 John iv. 1.

†† Mark iv. 24.

‡‡ Eccles. v. 1.

§§ The pamphlet containing the account of this impostor has become very scarce. Its title is, "A Narrative of the extraordinary case of George Lukins, of Yatton, Somersetshire, who was possessed of evil spirits for nearly eighteen years. Also, an Account of his remarkable Deliverance in the Vestry-room of Temple Church, in the City of Bristol, extracted from the manuscripts of several persons, who attended, &c. &c. Bulgin and Prosser. Bristol. 1788."

|| 2 Tim. iv. 3. κνηθόμενοι τὴν ἀκοήν, itching in the ears, as it were with the leprosy; for κνησμός is the name of that disease.

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the genuine offspring of ignorance, nursed and educated by human fears; and enthusiasm springs from a desire of being wise above that, which is written. The law of God was directed against diviners, soothsayers, dreamers, and every impostor: against all, who affected to open futurity in such ways, was its ban pronounced. The midnight sounds, that proceeded from the forest devoted to unhallowed rites, the howling of the wind, and the roar of the thunder were accounted the voice of God; the footsteps of the invisible Spirit were traced in the meteor, that darted athwart the sky; the flight of birds, and the palpitation of a victim's entrails were thought to denote his will. Rightly then was the Word of God opposed to such things;—but the principle is the same, though the manner be different in every imposture, which would rush into the secrets of the Most High.

The true religion is always contented with sober truth: it abhors fiction, and requires no addition to the light, which God graciously has dispensed to it. Impressed with reverence to the Father of our spirits, like charity, it becometh not itself unseemly; loving mercy, walking humbly, it scatters the good seeds of righteousness, and meekly trusts to HIM, who shall give to them the increase. Remembering, that God's ways are higher than our ways, and that His thoughts are above our thoughts, it discards all extravagancies, and knowing, that although heaven and earth may pass away, God's kingdom never shall be removed, it labours for the meat, that shall endure to eternal life. "*Not tossed about by every wind of doctrine, whereby some lie in wait to deceive,*" not claiming for itself a fellowship with the Lamb, whilst it is devoting *others* to the dragon and to the beast, not prying for motives in the eyes of any, whilst it is regardless of the beam in its own, not exulting in the noisy display of the Pharisee and condemning the unobtrusive Publican, it examines the recesses of its own spirit, and prays for the clean heart, and the outpoured influence from above.

Such is religion! Yet, how many counterfeits pass under its name! Solomon assured us, that the whole duty of man is † comprised in the fear of God, and in keeping His commandments: and as His commandments include the love of Himself and our neighbour, the words of Solomon correspond to ‡ those of Christ. Religion is always seated in the heart, and its outward action is always of that character, which will bear a testimony to its inward seat. It is not controlled by sudden impulses, and it never disturbs the household of faith. It is never puffed up. It affects not to belong to Paul against Apollos, nor to Apollos against Cephas; but it strives to prove, that it belongs to Christ. Let me not, however, be misunderstood, as if I were attacking the body of Dissenters of this parish; for nothing is more distant from my intentions. But it would ill become me to disregard the wishes of those who have requested, that the impiety and blasphemy which have been circulated among us, should be noticed in this pulpit.

There was § a man in Christ, who, whether he was in the body or out of the body, was caught up into the third heaven: yet even he—the inspired one—had not the power to utter what he heard, nor ever stated he what he saw; if then to him no such a commission was given, and if those deep mysteries are such, as "*eye hath not || seen, nor ear heard; nor the heart of man conceived,*" how believe any of you, that such a commission has now been given, or that now "*the eye hath seen and the ear hath heard*" those impenetrable secrets of the Almighty? And since we are assured, that the Jews, who believed not Moses and the ¶ prophets, would not have believed one risen from the dead, and since

* Eph. iv. 14.

† Eccles. xii. 13.

‡ Matt. xxii. 36—41.

§ 2 Cor. xii. 1—5.

|| 1 Cor. ii. 9. Isaiah lxi. 4.

¶ Luke xvi. 31.

the authority of Him, who made this declaration, renders the assertion equally applicable to the Christian dispensation, are you so weak, as to imagine, *that any one is empowered to carry communications from them to men?* "Beware * of false prophets, which come unto you in sheep's clothing!"

St. Paul foretold the time,† when sound doctrine would not be endured—when people should heap to themselves teachers, turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned to fables; he foretold also perilous times, when some‡ would have "a form of godliness, but deny its power," exhorting the church to turn away from such, whom he accurately defined. "For of § this sort are they, *which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sin, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" And what said ¶ Christ? "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied ¶¶ in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, all that work iniquity."

** "God is not the author of confusion." Various will the mystery of iniquity work. It has already worked with all deceivableness and lying wonders. We know from the words of Christ, that impostors will arise, who will †† (if it be possible) deceive the very elect; and even in the days of the apostles the faith of some was overthrown by those who affirmed the resurrection †† to be already passed. To the knowledge even of those, who were first commissioned to preach the Gospel, and to confirm it by miracles, and by the power of the Spirit, a boundary was fixed:—to them Christ said, "it is not for you to know the times and the §§ seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power:" must not those, then, who in these days affect a forbidden knowledge, prophesy after "the deceit of their own hearts?"

But, what shall we say of women intruding themselves into sacred ministrations? St. Paul says, ||| let your women *keep silence* in the churches! *for it is not permitted unto them to speak:—for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church: ¶¶ let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH.*" Language so very positive and determinate (it might have been hoped) would not have been treated, as a dead letter by any Christian; yet unfortunately we are aware of instances, in which these Scriptures have been set aside, as unmeaning, or as unimportant. The woman was no more intended to minister in sacred things, than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*** were intended to burn incense before the Lord;—on the contrary, the Corinthian woman was enjoined to have *power* ††† on her head, that is, to wear over

* Matt. vii. 15.

† 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

‡ Ibid. iii. 5.

§ 2 Tim. vi. 7.

¶ Matt. vii. 22, 23.

¶¶ In St. Paul's epistles prophesying is extended in its meaning to an exposition of the Scriptures, or to the interpretation of them in the language of the hearers. A psalm or hymn sung, or instrumentally performed in honour of God, also was so called. The scholiast on the 6th Mukama of Hariri states, that *NARA* means the same as *AKHBARA*, *he informed, he showed*; from whence, it would appear, that the different senses of prophesying proceeded: for the Aramaean dialect of the Hebrew abounded with Arabic significations.

** 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

†† Matt. xxiv. 24.

‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

§§ Acts i. 7.

||| 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

¶¶ 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

*** Numbers xvi. 1—41.

††† 1 Cor. xi. 10. The *tsaif*, which Rebecca and Tamar are recorded to have worn, was probably of the same description as that which St. Paul recommended. It scarcely left the eyes free, and it hung down as far behind, as before: it was the *chadr* of the Persians, the *khidr* or *sir* of the Arabs. The Rabbinical writers frequently call it *chophah*; and in the fourth volume of Chardin's Travels a representation of it may be seen. St. Paul's directions were the more stringent, because the Jewish women covered their heads in the synagogues with a

her head the long veil, which reached to her feet, that she might not become an object of particular observation. To be *stripped of the veil was the greatest opprobrium. Though with us the usage be different; the leading principle, which St. Paul would enforce, remains in its scriptural authority.

"No prophecy of the Scripture † is of any private interpretation:" every prophecy, that is so limited, is false. "*I have dreamed, I have dreamed:*" but did God ever yet vouchsafe a vision without some important object? The Divine communications were made to Abraham and the patriarchs, that the faith, to which they had been called apart from that of Mesopotamia, might be established, and that in Abraham's seed all the nations might be blessed. Visions were afforded in the times of the Judges, not so much for the sake of the individuals, who received them, as for the deliverance of the people from slavery to freedom, from idolatry to the true religion, and for proofs, to the ordained deliverers, that God would be with them. And God's future purposes were made known to the prophets, for the general good, for the revival of the faith, and for an authentic preparation for Christianity. A vision was vouchsafed to St. Paul, that by his conversion he might boldly preach the Gospel, and assert the faith, which he had persecuted, and laboured to destroy; and a vision was granted to St. Peter, that his Jewish prejudices might be conquered, and that through him the other apostles might be convinced, that God willed the admission of the Gentiles into His church. In all these a holy and magnificent purpose—one, which concerned God's people at large—was manifested.

Be ye not then deceived by vain pretensions! The sowing in time must be reaped in eternity, and at that harvest the tares shall be separated from the wheat:—as God shall "bring to light the hidden things of darkness," every disguise shall vanish, and every blasphemy shall be arraigned before Him, to whom are known the secrets of all hearts. Every action shall be weighed in His righteous balance, and every delusion, by which men have been persuaded ‡ to believe a lie, shall be exposed in its impiety. Use then the reason, which God has given to you.

white veil named *talith*; and it is worthy of observation, that in Hindū marriages a ribbon with a golden head hanging to it is suspended, after certain prayers and benedictions, round the bride's neck by the bridegroom, in token of his *power* over her; and at his death it is burned, to denote the termination of the contract. The ribbon is denominated in Sanscrit *talita*, which brings back to our mind the *talith* of the Hebrews. The *radid* was another veil worn by the Hebrew women, and so appears to have been the *mit'pachet*; though some have understood both as a tunic or cloak wrapped round the whole body. Because the veil was accounted the symbol of the husband's *power*, St. Paul used the word *ἐξουσία*, exactly, as Isidore (Off. Eccl. ix.) called it on the same account; and the term was perhaps common; for Rabbi Eliezer is said, in Pirki Aboth, to have taken away his niece's *power*, when he stripped her of her veil. Tertullian (De Virginibus Velandis) styles the veil the *jugum*. To which he it added, that in some of the Rabbinical writings the veil is called *resheth*; but although the word belongs not to the pure Hebrew, its root surviving both in the Samaritan and Chaldee, shows that if the Rabbin applied it to a veil, its true meaning was *power*; and if it existed in St. Paul's day with that force, *ἐξουσία* will be at once explained. The *Kámus* gives the sense of concealment to the Arabic root *rassa* in the second conjugation. Hence, probably, the Rabbinical writers borrowed the idea of a veil.

* The Song of Solomon v. 7. According to Ketuboth, lxxii. 1, women, who are uncovered, may be dismissed by their husbands without a dowry; and in Pirki Aboth, xxxv. they are called a disgrace to their families. Valerius Maximus, vi. 3, 10, records that Caius Sulpicius Gallus repudiated his wife, because he saw her out of doors uncovered. Leydekker affirms, that the Hebrew virgins wore one sort of veil, and the married women another, the latter of which was the *ἐξουσία* of St. Paul. In Arabic phraseology, to be stripped of the veil is equivalent to stupration.

When He desired us to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, He desired us also to love Him *with all our * understanding*. He has taught us, that the fear † of Him is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is *understanding*; and to the keeping of His law, ‡ and the learning of His commandments it is necessary; for it is “a well-spring of life § unto him that hath it, but the instruction of fools is folly.” God deals with us, as rational creatures; He neither delivered the law, nor introduced Christianity without giving *convincing* evidence of His Truth. He looks not at the || outward appearance, but at the heart, and ¶ the thoughts; and “knows ** what is in man; and He will †† give a portion to the impostor and to the hypocrite. His “Word is sharper †† than any two-edged sword;” and none may trifle with it; and His unsearchable §§ judgments are a great deep, and “His ways are past finding out.”

Mistake not then for religion, the desire of any who aim to be distinguished; mistake not the effects of human vanity, for the revelations of the Most High. Man's breath is in his nostrils: he is going where the rich and the poor, the known and the unknown shall be alike assembled: his dying bed and his dying hour will not be suited either to impositions, or to worldly trifles; his eyes about to be closed in death will not brighten at the lying revelations of the deceiver. And your preparation for that hour cannot be forwarded by these things.—a spiritual pride may be engendered, but *that* will make shipwreck of your faith. “God ||| resisteth the proud,” but He “dwells with him who is of a contrite ¶¶ spirit.” Remember, that *** the Lord was not in the “strong wind,” that rent the mountains, and brake the rocks in pieces,—that He was neither in the earthquake, nor in the fire; but that the *still small voice* denoted His presence.

Let your zeal be according to knowledge; and expect only the ordinary ways of the Divine providence. Trust not to ††† broken reeds, nor hew out to yourselves ††† “broken cisterns, which can hold no water.” Follow not those who may say, §§§ “Lo! here is Christ! or lo! there is Christ!” but “seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” |||| and all things necessary shall be added unto you. Judge of your future condition by the Word of God!—the sacred volume is sufficient to guide you to a happy immortality. In it your faith is revealed; in it unerring directions to secure the ¶¶¶ one thing needful are given, and in it may be found instructions to obtain the **** pearl of great price. Bring every thing to the test of the written Word: and “*whoso †††† readeth, LET HIM UNDERSTAND.*”

* διαvoίq. Matt. xxii. 37; Luke x. 27. In Mark xii. 33, ἐξ ὅλης τῆς συνείσεως.

† Prov. ix. 10.

‡ Psalm cxix. 34, 73.

§ Prov. xvi. 22.

|| 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Cf. 2. Cor. x. 7.

¶ Psalm xciv. 11.

** John ii. 25.

†† Matthew xxiv. 51.

†† Heb. iv. 12.

§§ Psalm xxxvi. 6. Romans xi. 33.

|| James iv. 6; 1 Peter v. 5.

¶¶ Isaiah lvii. 15; lxvi. 2.

*** 1 Kings xix. 11—13.

††† Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

††† Jeremiah ii. 13.

§§§ Matthew xxiv. 23.

|||| Matthew vi. 33.

¶¶¶ Luke x. 42.

**** Matthew xiii. 46.

†††† Matthew xxiv. 15.

A CHRISTIAN SPEAKING AFTER DEATH.

A Funeral Sermon,

PREACHED IN TRINITY CHURCH, TROWBRIDGE, WILTS,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE MANSFIELD, A.B.,

Incumbent,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1849,

On the Death of J. W. Dawes, Esq.

“ He being dead yet speaketh.”—Heb. xi. 4.

IT is the duty of a minister to endeavour to improve all events that occur, but more particularly events which are fresh on the minds of those whom he endeavours to instruct, and more particularly still, events of a solemn character and of a startling kind. It is my duty to endeavour to improve at this time an event of this latter kind—to discourse, for our comfort and edification this day, upon the death of one, whose person was familiar to us all, and whose removal from the midst of us is the subject of our universal regret—a regret only mitigated by the assurance which we all must feel, that our loss is his unspeakable gain—“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: even so saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” “The righteous shall enter into peace; they shall rest upon their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.” “We sorrow not, even as others which have no hope, for we believe that if Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.”

► In Scripture the lives of saints are set forth to us as eminently instructive, and the services of our church constantly bring them before us from time to time. The lives of the wicked are set forth for warnings, but the lives of God's chosen ones are held out for our encouragement and our example; and if the lives of those who lived so long back are constantly pressed into notice, why should we not dwell also upon those which, as it were, our eyes have seen, and our hands handled—that have been known to us either as prominent in the ways of sin, or prominent in the pursuit of that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?” The dear departed friend, whose memory we all revere, whose mortal remains we last week consigned with heartfelt sorrow to the grave, and whose special mourners some of us are here to-day—he was of this latter class: he went in and out amongst us; his life was open and plain before us all; we knew him as a friend, a brother, an aged disciple, whose smile had in it the impress and the seal of Heaven; why then should we not this day once more call him to our mind, and pay to him not only the last tribute of respect, and gratify ourselves, not only by dropping tears to his memory, but by dwelling more especially on the example that was so constantly before us, and who “being dead yet speaketh,” saying unto each of us this

day, 'seek to follow me as I sought to follow Christ, and am now happy and blessed, being for ever with the Lord.'

But let us enter into a few particulars, and in them see what it is that the life and death of our beloved friend and brother in the Lord would especially impress upon our hearts—or rather, let me say, what we might hope the Spirit of God would use to stir us up to a profitable use of the opportunity that we now have, in dwelling upon a solemn event that is so fresh before our minds.

1. And first, I would say, that our beloved friend "being dead *yet* speaketh," and saith to us this day, "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever." "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone." Yes, the longest life will have its termination, and when that termination comes, what has our life been but "a tale that is told; a vapour that hath appeared but for a little time, and then vanished away?" Few are permitted to see our dear friend's long life, and fewer still to see so long a life in such habitual good health. He was most erect, as you know, in his person; he was even in old age ruddy with health, and he was particularly active for his years. Yet the last day, the last hour, the last moment, when he was to dwell on earth arrived; "the golden bowl was broken, the silver cord was loosed," and the spirit quitted the tenement of clay. "Truly all flesh is as grass, and all the *glory* of man"—whether in health or in form, whether in riches or in friends, whether in a goodly reputation or in an upright character, whether in splendid deeds or in lowly charity—all the "glory of man is as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord standeth fast for ever, and this is His Word preached" to us in our friend's death, that "dust we are and unto dust must we return."

My aged friends, this speaks to *you*; my younger friends, this is not without a voice to *you* also; and the lesson it conveys to us all is, that we should learn to estimate duly the purposes for which life has been given us. On a dying bed what will it have profited us to have set our affections on things below, when all will appear but "*vanity* and vexation of spirit," when the longest life shall appear but as a dream? And oh! what a terrible thing, *just then*, to awake, and awake but to the terrible consciousness that we have spent in vain that life which God gave us, in order that we might glorify Him, and that we might spend it in doing His will, and seeking to be prepared to dwell in His holy heaven! Listen then to the voice that comes from the grave of an aged saint this day, saying to young and old, to rich and poor, to minister and people—"prepare to meet thy God."

2. But, secondly, we are reminded by our departed friend, that neither old age, nor a death-bed is the proper time to begin to seek this preparation of which his death would speak. He put not off his preparation to such a time, and it was well for him that he did not. His hearing, as you know, for a long time not good, latterly was greatly impaired; his mind too, though it never failed him to the very last, was not for some months past nearly as vigorous as it used to be; and as to his death-bed, the time spent upon that was far too short for him to give such attention to spiritual things, as to have left behind him any comfortable assurance that he had an interest in Christ, or had really

possessed that repentance and faith which we must possess, if we are to be admitted within the portals of the blest. But no! for a long time past, he had been an earnest seeker of grace, and he endeavoured that while he could hear he would hear; and, while reason and intellect were vigorous, he applied them to the acquirement of that knowledge which would give him not only comfort in life, but support and consolation in the solemn hour of his death. His, then, was not the painful case that we too often witness, where we speak but men cannot hear, and where their not being able to hear is the greatest distress that we are under; for, "by grace are we saved through faith," and "faith cometh by *hearing*;" but how can men hear if the faculty has been taken from them? His, too, was not that other painful case where in old age the mind becomes so enfeebled that it cannot understand, and before it became so there was no evidence of conversion. Nor was his that other painful case when on a death-bed, with the mind racked by pain, or tortured by agony, we are obliged to add to that pain, by asking questions of the patient, and suggesting the painful thought, that a death-bed repentance is most unsatisfactory, and that too often there is reason to believe that seriousness on a death-bed is more from a desire to escape from hell than to have any love for the Lord Jesus Christ. No—although our dear friend heard not much latterly with the outward ear, faith had been given him before this affliction came upon him, and he had laid hold of Christ; and, even if his mind had *totally* failed, there was nothing to be apprehended from the failure as far as his soul's safety was concerned: and on *his* death-bed, there was no occasion to increase any little pain he may have had (we bless God that he had not much), for at that solemn time, in the hearty thanks that he returned for the prayer that the minister (unworthy truly of such an earnest member of his flock)—in the hearty thanks, I say, that he returned on the very night before he died for the prayer at his bed-side, he showed the state of his mind, and that his heart was to the last set upon spiritual things, and that he had enjoyment in the exercise and pursuit of them. Oh! how different, I say, from what we continually witness—both young and old putting off the evil day to some convenient season, and so refusing to accept the present salvation, as oftentimes to lead us to tremble as to whether it is ever to be accepted by them at all. Oh! my beloved friends, let it not be so with you; hear a voice this day which says "*now* is the accepted time," and, "to-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness." Use your hearing *now* to know the way of salvation and the comforts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; use your mind *now* to think upon His Word; use your eyes *now* to read the blessed Volume; use your memory to store up its precepts and its promises; and use your health and strength *now* in the service of the Lord, that when all these may fail, health and sight and intellect and memory and hearing—Christ may be the strength of your heart, and God your portion for ever.

3. But another lesson that is spoken to us by this event is, that it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that gives *true* support, *true* consolation, *true* peace to the soul. I never met a man that was more sensible that he was a sinner, or one that to the last felt more the unworthiness that all ought to feel who have a *right* knowledge of themselves, and a *right* knowledge of the holy, the righteous, and the fearful God with whom we have to do; and if there was anything that gave him hope, and hope he had—"a good hope through grace"—

if ever there was a sermon that he enjoyed more than another, or a means of grace that he had particular pleasure in, it was the sermon of the means that spoke most of the freeness of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ to the very chief of sinners. He was not an individual, as far as I could discover, that hindered the peace of his soul by extreme views, or by dwelling too exclusively on the sovereignty of God. This truth he received and rejoiced in, in its proper place—he rejoiced that if he had any evidence that he was born of God, this was also an evidence that he had been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; but his want of this evidence, I believe, never led him to conclude that he was a cast-away; nor did the sovereignty of God ever, as far as I know, prevent him from believing that there was mercy for Him in Christ, if he accepted that mercy on Christ's terms, namely, "without money and without price." He knew indeed that no man can come to Jesus except the Father draw him, but he did not make this an excuse (as too many do) for *not coming* to Jesus at all, and rejoicing in His salvation: and, that "eternal life is the *gift* of God through Jesus Christ," was his great solace, his blessed comfort, his *chief* support, is the sincere belief that I have respecting my aged friend, my constant hearer, my devotedly attached and affectionate brother in the Lord: and that it was not only his hope and his great support, but that it was a sufficient hope and more than sufficient support, when he was either troubled with the trials of life, or troubled, as every Christian is, with the plague of his own heart, and ready to be cast down—this is also my fullest belief; and that he was a living witness, a specimen before us, of what the apostle meant when he said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." I know not but that he could look back on a life well spent as well as any, even the best of us (and this is a satisfaction in itself), but *this* was not *his* support, if he could do so; nor was it to him the occasion of despair, if he could not do so. No! his *great* support, I repeat, his *great* plea, his Divine consolation, his blessed encouragement, his *only* boast was simply, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief," and that "whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in nowise cast out." Blessed hope! glorious consolation! delightful news! insuring the sanctification of the sinner that believes it, and bringing him into covenant with a God who cannot fail, whose purposes are everlasting, and whose love is unchangeable to all who make their boast of Christ, and evidence by their lives that "He is all their salvation, and all their desire." And this is another lesson that He would teach us this day, namely, that there is only one foundation that we can rest upon, and that foundation is Christ Jesus the Lord. The sovereignty of God is a blessed truth, but *this* is not Jesus Christ. Election is the privilege of God's children, but *this* is not Jesus Christ. Sacraments are excellent, but they are not the God of our salvation. A life well spent is a something to be proud of, but this is no atonement for sin. Good resolutions, frames and feelings, reformations of our ways, and settled purposes to serve the Lord, are all far from being to be despised, but they are not the sure foundation which has been laid in Zion; and not only does the Word of God tell us, that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid" in the merits and righteousness of the Son of God, but I am persuaded that if our dear friend could quit that bright abode where, I believe, he is singing the praises of the Lamb "that loved him, and washed him from his sins in His own blood," he would

say in the midst of us this day with his loudest voice, and in the most earnest tones—' Oh ! cast from you every other trust ; seek refuge and security in no other hope, and glory in nothing but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the sinner's great security on earth, and the subject of the sinner's highest praise in heaven : He will secure for you the Father's pardon, He will open for you the gates of glory, He will lead you to fountains of living waters—oh ! then, as Jesus is the subject of highest praise in heaven, let Him be yours also on earth.'

4. But, once more, we learn another lesson from our beloved friend ; and that is, that resting upon Christ only for salvation, neither sets aside the use of means, nor leads to living carelessly, as to the outward evidence of the possession of inward grace. Indeed you can all bear evidence on this point, as to our departed brother. When were the doors of this house of prayer open, that he was not in his place, either week-day, or Sabbath, or at any other time ? When was the Lord's table spread, that he did not meet with us there ? or when was there any other opportunity whatever given that he might get good to his soul, that there he was not also ? For the seven years that it was my privilege to know that amiable, that kindest of living men, I never once knew him to shrink from attending upon any means of grace amongst us ; and I am thankful to say, that he often expressed to me how refreshed by them he felt in his soul. His was no formal worship ; his attendance was not merely the cold performance of a duty, or the satisfying some dictates of conscience with regard to what was right ; his was truly a hungering and thirsting for the words of life ; and no one who has seen him use his ear-trumpet, with the assistance of which he could catch a few words, or has heard his hearty " Amen," and seen his devout behaviour in the house of God, but must say, ' Truly, that man was in earnest ; truly, that man's desire was to " worship in spirit and in truth." ' Devotedly attached to the Church of England, yet he was not uncharitable towards others ; he had no obstinate prejudices, no silly ways ; whoever got up into this pulpit, he listened to with attention ; and if he could find scriptural truth in their discourses, he drank it deeply into his soul ; but if not, he made no unkind remark. Follow him from the house of God to his daily walk—follow him into the minutest transactions of life—and there he was scrupulous to a degree ; and, as I know, even to a solitary fraction, there was not an error to be found in any of his dealings, or in any business with which he was engaged. An ill-natured remark I never heard from his lips ; an unkind word, I believe, he could not give. He was liberal in his assistance to every good cause, to an extent that showed his heart had been enlarged by the power of Divine grace : he never gave merely because it was his duty to give. No ; he considered it a high privilege to be able to testify his love to Christ, and, as far as in him lay, to assist the cause which lay near to his Christian heart. Such was our departed friend—not perfect, it is true, any more than any other of God's saints who have not yet been delivered from the burden of the flesh, but a beautiful witness, a striking evidence that salvation by grace does not lead to carelessness of life or neglect of the means of grace, but quite the contrary ; that the belief of it is a real incentive to activity in the cause of Christ, and leads to the enjoyment of all those means whereby our souls are to be refreshed, and by which we are to grow up into Christ our living head. Away then with the supposition that the Gospel of *free* forgiveness is not practical in effect, or

that the professors of it think that they can act as they like, and live according to the sinful lusts of the flesh. As the apostle says, *this has always been* and it ever will be the great charge against "the truth as it is in Jesus"—"may we not then continue in sin that grace may abound?" The apostle himself, however, refutes the charge; and, blessed be God, so do the life and conversation of all who are consistent with the profession that they make. And show me the man that of all men works hardest *for* his salvation, doing all that he can in order that he may be accepted by God, and I will show you a man that works as hard *from* salvation, and because he *has been* "accepted in the Beloved," and expects to be saved solely and simply by the merits of our Lord—while there is this great difference between the two, that the man who works *for* salvation has little or no enjoyment in the task in which he is engaged, while to the other the service of Christ is "*perfect freedom*"—just the description of the manner in which the service of Christ was regarded by our departed friend. He *enjoyed* religion: for thirty years he had known the truth, and the truth had set him free; and when his appointed time came, he was gathered into the granary of God, like as a shock of corn is gathered in when it is ripe for the sickle; and he is now before the throne of God. He is, we believe, enjoying the full presence of Him by sight, with whom, before he went hence, he desired to walk by faith. Now he is drinking of the fountain, before he could only drink at the streams. Now he has personal communion with the Head, before he could only have personal communion with the members. Now he is before the throne of the Lamb, before he could only come to the throne of grace. Now his voice, so much on earth engaged in prayer, is entirely the voice of praise. Now he is in the enjoyment of the present glory of the Lord, and waits with Him until the day when the sleeping dust of all the saints shall once more be united to their sainted spirits, and body and soul shall have their perfect consummation and bliss in God's eternal and everlasting glory. Who then would desire to bring him back, who then, much as he was loved, much as he was respected, much as his example was a bright specimen of the influence of grace, and the power of true religion in the soul—who would desire to see him occupy once more that accustomed place? Nay, not even, I believe, his widowed partner with whom he had lived for all but sixty long years, and whom grace alone can support under a bereavement such as this—nay, not even his nearest and dearest friends—nay, not I who have been so often cheered by his presence, who, I knew, listened to my voice with satisfaction, if no other individual present did. Who would bring him back, released from the troubles of a sinful world, delivered from the burden of the flesh, resting from his labours, and happy in the enjoyment of everlasting bliss? Who would bring him back—him crowned with a crown of righteousness, invested with a spotless robe, and wearing the palm branch of triumph in his hands?—who would bring him back to pray, who, is now engaged in praise? who would bring him back to hear the voice of one of like passions with himself, who is now listening to the voice of Christ? Oh, no! rather let us enter into the beautiful language of our burial service and say—"We give Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that Thou hast delivered this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." Rather let us follow him in faith to the glory that he enjoys; and while we realise that glory, and remember that it is for sinners that it has been prepared, let us breathe this prayer from our hearts, and breathe it having his peaceful

death before our minds, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit rest thee now;
Even while with us thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.
Dust to its narrow house beneath,
Soul to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more will fear to die."

My brethren, I have now all but done. I have paid the last tribute to departed worth; I have done my last duty to my beloved friend. I have said no more than a full heart would warrant, and I have said less than the subject deserves; but if I have said aught that is incorrect, may the blood that cleanses from all sin be sprinkled upon what is wrong. I cannot close, however, without pressing upon you, in connection with our friend's death, this important truth, that while his death speaks comfort to all his surviving friends, it speaks trumpet-tongued to all who are not following the path in which he trod. It speaks especially to the aged, and to all whose footsteps are upon the grave; it tells them how necessary it is to seize the present time, and to accept the salvation that is in Jesus, for who can tell what a day or what an hour may bring forth? It speaks to aged *men*, showing them that a hoary head is a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness. It speaks to them who think that in religion there is no joy. It speaks to those who think that religion is only a matter of outward ceremonies, or observances to be attended to. It speaks to those who are living contrary to the profession which they make. And it speaks to those who suppose that religion is only for certain seasons; that it is very good, but only in its right place. It tells us that preparation for heaven is not in some acts done, or some resolutions formed, or some amendments made, but that preparation for heaven is an *habitual* state of mind; it is the current of our thoughts, it is the objects after which we are constantly seeking: and that if these objects are not the glory of God, the magnifying of Christ, and sanctification and guidance by the Spirit, then have we only a name to live, and no blessed security wherewith to die—whereas, if we have been ever such wanderers from the fold of Christ, if our hearts have been hard as the nether millstone, still there is mercy for us in Jesus; and if we are made sensible of this, and are led to embrace His salvation, the effect will be that we shall be epistles known and read of all men; and the *habitual* state of our minds will be a preparation to meet death when it comes, and to enter into the presence of "Him whom having not seen we love, and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH SIN.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE FISK, LL.B.

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHAPEL, MAIDA HILL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1849.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—Ephesians v. 11.

THE true Christian state is one of entire separation from sin in all its forms. The object of our Lord's mediatorial mission was not only to release us from the penalties and bondage of the law, but also to "redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The remission of sin, the discharging of penalties, and the loosing of the law's bondage would avail but little, were there not also a destructive blow given to the dominion of sin over us—were there not also the infusion within us of the principle and the power of practical holiness. Hence St. Paul, in his epistle to Titus, says—"The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;"—from which it is evident, that he who hath partaken of "the grace which bringeth salvation" is actually invested with a power to deny, to resist, or (as the word is elsewhere translated) to refuse compliance with "ungodliness and worldly lusts;" and moreover, that there is bestowed on him enabling grace, through the strength of which he may, if he will, "live soberly, righteously and godly," even "in this present world," where iniquity abounds. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation" does not prescribe to us what we are to avoid or to do, without tendering to us a spiritual capability both of avoiding and of doing. So, then, responsibility in both particulars rests with ourselves.

You may observe, my brethren, how the apostle, in the eighth verse of the chapter from which our text is taken, bases his exhortations on a matter of fact, which is true in regard to all real believers. "Ye were sometime darkness," said he—and "darkness" is used to signify sin, in its principle and practice; "but now are ye light in the Lord"—and as light is the opponent idea to that of darkness, so the holiness which it implies is the opponent of sin. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye (Christians) light"—"light in the Lord." This is the matter of fact. The true Christian has therefore been delivered from a state of absolute and positive sinfulness, and brought into an opposite state of holiness, which is his peculiar and proper state as a child of God, as a full partaker of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. He was not only in a state of darkness, but he was the "darkness" itself; that is, his whole being was but embodied sin. We wish every unconverted man to bear this in mind; it greatly concerns him. In his darkness there is no light—not

a single ray ; in him there is no admixture of holiness ; his best moral virtues, for which men may praise him, have no seed-principle of holiness within them ; they are therefore “ dead works ”—they cannot bring glory to God, nor can they earn for his soul the blessings of salvation. But the sinner who “ by grace through faith ” has entered into his proper Christian relation to God in Christ, is not merely in a state where light shines upon him, but becomes “ light in the Lord ”—“ light,” by virtue of his living union with Him who is Light, who is “ the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” The seed-principle of light, which is holiness, is sown within him ; and therefore, as the seed expands, so his “ light shines before men,” and they “ see his good works ;” and so he glorifies, and they through him glorify, “ their Father in heaven.” And we wish every truly converted sinner to bear this fact in mind ; it is the foundation of all his happy experience in the ways of God ; the more firmly he believes it, the more surely does he wield the power of holiness, the more successful is his warfare against all things in the world that are opposed to holiness. He does not stand up against sin in the impotence of mere moral strength, but in the might of an inward holiness, wrought in him by the indwelling Spirit of God. And how solid, then, is the ground of separation unto God on which he stands, as the antagonist of “ all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life ! ” Brethren, I firmly believe, that much of that disquietude of mind under a consciousness of defective holiness, which falls to the lot of so many Christians, is the result of an ineffectual moral endeavour on the side of holiness which belongs to them who have indeed become “ light in the Lord.”

The apostle seems to have had this in his mind, when giving that strong exhortation to the Christians at Corinth—“ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come out from among them ;” because of the power—the power of holiness—that is within you, by the indwelling Spirit of God. “ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Now, then, let us endeavour to apply what has been said to the elucidation of the text. “ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

This precept (as I have endeavoured to show you) was given to those who once had been “ darkness,” but who “ by grace through faith ” had become “ light in the Lord ”—to those, therefore, who had within them, as the gift of God and the Spirit, the principle and the power of holiness. As a precept, it still applies to all persons in all ages who shall enjoy the like faith.

Our first inquiry is—What are the “ works of darkness ? ” In the foregoing verses of the chapter, we have the materials from which the answer may be drawn ; in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first verses, we have a more enlarged view of them ; and in these two passages we have an awful picture indeed of the depravity, as ma-

nifested in action, of man's earthly nature, declaring too surely that absolutely he is "darkness," until the light of true holiness is set up in his soul. "The works of darkness" are "the works of the flesh:" that you will gather at once from these two passages. They are the works of man's nature, therefore, in its unreconciled, in its unregenerate state. And when we speak of "the works of the flesh," we include in the expression the workings of his intellectual and moral nature, as well as the outward transactions of which the body and its members are the instruments. The motives which influence, the principles which govern, and the affections which stimulate the unconverted man, are motives, principles and affections of darkness, and not of light; the outward actings of his daily life are but the manifestations of their power, of their entire and unchecked ascendancy. They are called in the text "unfruitful works of darkness;" not as if they were unproductive, but as being contrasted with "the fruits of the Spirit," which in the ninth verse are said to be "in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Whatever form, therefore, sin may assume, we are bound to speak of it as "the work of darkness." Plead for it, apologize for it, extenuate it, soften it down to a mere weakness, array it with a robe of moral virtue, if you will, but essentially it is "the work of darkness;" and until the process of renewal and sanctification by the Holy Ghost shall have been begun in the heart of a pardoned, justified and accepted sinner, he will have only "the unfruitful works of darkness" to present to the heart-searching One, who hath said—"Be ye holy, for I am holy."

By "the unfruitful works of darkness" the believer is surrounded, during every step of his arduous progress up the steep ascent of personal holiness; and one of his greatest trials is to feel those "works of darkness," and to feel their power when exhibited by those among whom he must come in contact, and who may perchance be bound to him by the ties of kindred and natural affection, or with whom he may be in any way connected, in regard to the interests and pursuits of daily life. Such trial is inseparable from the Christian state; and the more spiritual a Christian has become, the more keen will be his sense of the greatness of the trial. By every work of darkness he sees that God whom he supremely honours and loves, dishonoured and despised; while he beholds the soul that works the work of darkness in danger, and drawing daily nearer and nearer to the brink of an awful abyss, from which at length there may be no escape. But should it happen that his own spiritual progress is retarded, that his own spiritual affections have become less warm and active, may he not, in a manner and to a degree not always clearly perceptible to himself, come to look on the works of darkness with less steadiness of aversion—especially if they assume no very flagrant form? May he not begin to withhold his protest against them? May he not be coerced into silence, by the overbearing pretensions of sin, in those over whom he has no power of control? May he not—and has it not often happened?—may he not connive at some work of darkness, when either his worldly interests or his natural affections may seem likely to be secured or gratified by it? May he not shrink from viewing it narrowly in the light of God's Word? May he not at length become its apologist? And if he does, what shall hinder his regarding it with complacency? How many a believer has been led or drawn for a time from the distinction of position and character as a child of God, in which he once rejoiced, when hemmed in by the works of

darkness, against whose influence he has not had the vigilance or the Christian hardihood to contend! How many a heart has been made to "know its own bitterness," after succumbing to a power against which it might, if it would, have made a vigorous and successful and triumphant stand!

Then, brethren, our next inquiry must be—what course it becomes the true Christian to take, amidst dangers such as these. The text replies—"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." If we come at any time to look on the works of darkness with complacency, or even with toleration, is there not danger of a compromise of principle, and may we not at length "have fellowship" with them? Who can tell to what extent we may be drifted away from God and from the way of holiness in which He would have His children walk, when once, under the influence of sin and sinners, we have made a compromise of Christian principle? Will sin and sinners allure us into one instance of compromise, without wresting from us many subsequent ones? And when the compromise has been made, even with difficulty, may it not be continued with facility? Many have tried the experiment, and fallen fearfully away from God. Let us, then, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

The word which is here translated "have fellowship with," is elsewhere translated "communicate" and "become partaker with." These varied expressions may give us the full sense of the original word. So that to "have fellowship with" the works of darkness, is to admit them into companionship, as familiar—to indulge in them in common with persons who make no Christian profession, and to participate the present pleasure or temporal advantages they may seem to yield. And certain it is, that such fellowship cannot be resisted, except by the sustaining power of that grace which is infused into the hearts of true believers, as "children of light," and of faith, and which needs, when once possessed, to be kept in constant and steady exercise. The avoiding of all "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" may involve many and painful sacrifices, both of feeling and of worldly interest; but the sacrifice never can be too great—for "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" If we are not prepared to make the sacrifice, whatever it may amount to, we cannot expect to enjoy the calm dignity of a soul that is walking humbly with its God. Better that our interest should perish—better that our affections should be crushed and blighted, than that we should defile our white garments by "having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

If we would stand free from such antagonists—if we would altogether avoid all "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"—then we should give heed to the next particular of our text: "but rather reprove them." And this may be done in various ways.

And first, we may do it by making our verbal protest against sin, by whomsoever it may be transacted and in whatever form it may be committed. This requires no small amount of wisdom, prudence and spiritual determination. The fear of earning the displeasure of sinners, nearly connected by kindred or society, keeps many a tongue silent that ought to be firm in its protest against sin. The rashness of zeal may sometimes lead others to "speak unadvisedly with their lips," so as to give an advantage to the sinner, even when most deserving reproof. Fear should never be allowed to hinder, zeal should never be permitted to mislead the true Christian, when need occurs for reprov-

ing sin. Firmness, characterized by mildness, and a freedom from all excitement of temper, should mark and give force to the language of reproof, which should, moreover, be hallowed by the enduring spirit of love—of a love which “suffereth long and is kind.” Many a thoughtless sinner, who would indignantly resent the harsh and injudicious reproof, will bow submissively under the influence of reproof no less sincere and definite, when administered with mildness and in love. However important it is, that the true Christian should ever be ready thus to “reprove” the works of darkness, yet that is not always the most suitable kind of reproof to which the lips give an immediate utterance; nay, there may be cases in which it would be anything but suited—in which it would be rather injurious. The transgressor may, perchance, be in a state of excitement; fear of some present consequences of sin, or remorse of conscience, may have rendered him unfit to receive the word of reproof, however judiciously administered. Unwise zeal in such a case would say—‘Withhold not reproof, speak freely and fearlessly to him, be faithful, do not compromise;’ but Christian prudence will say—‘I will await my opportunity, and in the mean time I will endeavour to reprove him by my example.’

Yes, dear brethren, the true Christian has great power of reproof, when he has weight enough of Christian character to become an example, and to be respected and beloved as such by those with whom he lives, or with whom he stands connected in any of the varied relations of society. We cannot overrate the influence of a genuine Christian example; it is more eloquent than words; it is more powerful than persuasion; it penetrates often when other means of reproof fall abortive on the surface of men’s hard hearts; it gives forth a sweet savour, which pervades the circle in which the Christian moves; it drops honey on the world’s gall; it sheds light upon the world’s darkness; it gives proof of what man’s nature may be—of what man’s character will be, when the living waters from the eternal spring have reached him; it shows that power over sin is not an impossible thing; it proves that to be “a new creature in Christ Jesus” is not a fable; it exhibits to the unconverted around us the practical of true religion. Yes, brethren, the life of a true believer, consistent in godliness, is the most powerful reprover of the works of darkness; and sinners who would be sturdy in their resistance of all lesser influences, are often constrained to yield to the serene and potent majesty of this. Certain it is, that the reproof which the lip utters, however sincere in intention it may be, loses all the force it might else possess, if the reprovéd find in the example of the reprover broad traces of inconsistency; for even those who habitually work the works of darkness know full well, by name, what the works of the light and of the day should be, and are not slow in urging their demand, that the Christian should actually be what he professes to be. I verily believe, that many workers of the works of darkness have continued such, by reason of the inconsistent example of those who profess to be “children of the light and of the day;” and it is not uncommon, even for the children of this world, to say—‘Better is it to be an acknowledged sinner, than a simulated saint.’ Sinners will tolerate any kind of inconsistency, rather than the inconsistency of Christian professors.

Then, dear brethren, let us bear in mind, that our lives, however we may frame them, whether in accordance with the Divine will or upon a lower standard—our lives are examples to others, and every example will tell upon others, either for good or for evil. It follows, therefore, that if we are not

constantly reproving the works of darkness by our consistent example, we must of necessity be encouraging the works of darkness by the inconsistency of our example. And if example has such effect, should we not be watchful in what direction and to what end we may constantly wield that power? Wield it we must, and only in eternity will it be disclosed what bearings our individual examples have had upon the unchangeable destinies of others.

"The unfruitful works of darkness" abound; they surround us on all sides; they are the characteristics of a "world that lieth in wickedness;" and we fear that the reproof administered comes not up to the necessity which they force upon our notice. Every man who is born of the Spirit must become a reprover of sin, if he would not be marked as a rebel against his God. Let Christian parents look at this; let ministers and employers regard it; let friends and neighbours be mindful of it. Let them remember, that the sin which is not reprovèd is countenanced. Let Christians, in their intercourse with all others, remember their allegiance to God in this respect; and let every one of us be guarded, watchfully guarded, against all "fellowship with the works of darkness." How many worldly considerations would allure us into such a fellowship, and if successful would lead us down to destruction! How many souls have "made shipwreck" under such ruinous influence! How many a young heart, touched with the loveliness of true Christianity, and beginning to glance heavenwards, has had its affections drawn down to some object of attachment, on whom the free grace of God unto eternal life has never rested! The "fellowship" has begun—the "unequal yoking together" with an unbeliever has commenced—the dream of passion and earthly affection has been realised; there has been no oneness of soul in the bonds of a Saviour's love; the sky is overspread, and in the horizon there is no single streak of light.

Brethren, weigh these things well. "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye, therefore, partakers with them."

EMIGRATION.

A Lecture,

BY THE

REV. RIDLEY H. HERSCHELL.

DELIVERED IN TRINITY CHAPEL, JOHN STREET, EDGWARE ROAD,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 1, 1849.

"An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen : in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."—Exodus xx. 24.

LET it not appear strange that I undertake to preach from a pulpit upon the subject of Emigration. I feel that as a minister of the Gospel I have not only to be shut up within the narrow bounds of my study, and to have my thoughts filled with ancient or modern writings relating to theological disquisitions, but that I have to feel and to act the part of a man. I have to stand in relation to man, with all those human sympathies, tender feelings, and high emotions, which are stimulated by the love of Jesus, and elevated by our sympathy with Him in His yearnings, His desires, and His labours, for the good of men. We have been too much in the habit of considering that the ministry of the Gospel consists only in a person enunciating a certain set of theological phrases, connected with dogmatic theology—the consequence of which has been, that a great many men who have not learned to read and study the Scriptures for themselves, have made up their minds that it is of no use for them to go to places of worship, because the ministers do not know what they feel and what they have to suffer. They imagine that we do not understand their conflicts, whether as tradesmen, or mechanics, or poor labourers; but stand forth and speak as if we were "beating the air," without feeling that sympathy which we should endeavour to realise. I have no doubt that such have been the feelings of many—and no wonder, because religion has been too much separated from ordinary life. The person who preaches the Gospel must be dressed in a certain costume for the pulpit; if connected with the Church of Rome, he must dress not like a private individual, even when walking through the streets—so as to be looked upon as a sort of type or representation of religion, just as an idol is a representation of heathen idolatry. And even where these outward symbols are not used, there is still an idea existing in the minds of some, that a certain stately dignity must be connected with every utterance from the pulpit, and a certain set of phrases employed, which belong only to pulpit phraseology; and thus they speak of what is becoming, and of what is unbecoming, the pulpit. Therefore it has come to pass, that those higher and better feelings which ought to exist between preacher and hearers have been almost lost sight of, and he is looked upon as

a man who is needed only at the bedside of the dying ; but never as a brother man, who can sympathise, and give counsel in matters relating to this life.

These feelings having dwelt much upon my mind, I thought that it would not be wrong for me to undertake this subject ; and however incompetent I may be to carry it out to the full extent of my desire, and however much I may fall short of your expectations, still it will be a great satisfaction for me to feel, that I have shown you that I know something of what is going on in the ordinary transactions of life, and also in the dark narrow alleys and cellars where misery and wretchedness dwell ; and I trust that I shall also be enabled to show, that there is a remedy providentially provided, of which we ought to avail ourselves, and to which we should contribute, in every possible way, for the amelioration of the sufferings of our fellow creatures. My object is, to show from Scripture that emigration to unpeopled lands has been from the beginning in the mind of God. This we see by His providential dealings with the children of men—that it was His intention that the earth which He created for man should be peopled by man, and that His blessing should ultimately cover the whole of it.

I will, therefore, first give you a brief historical sketch of Bible history connected with emigration ; and afterwards offer a few practical observations as to the character of those who ought to emigrate, and those things that are connected with their future welfare.

We find, in the record which God has given to us of the creation of man, in the first chapter of Genesis, that the object which He had in view was, that His creature should resemble Himself—"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ;" and that he was to "have dominion" over the earth, "and replenish and subdue it." In the second chapter we are told, that God created the garden of Eden and placed man in it, and he was there blessed, together with the whole creation ; thus intimating, that His object in creating this world and placing man upon it was, that He might have in it one of His creatures who was to resemble Himself, who was to be identified with heaven as well as earth, and that the whole of the creation was to be blessed on man's account. Even in this state of happiness, we are told that man was to be a tiller of the ground. It is distinctly stated, that before the creation of Adam there was no rain, but "a mist went up from the earth ;" and the reason was, "there was no man to till the ground." You all know that our first parents did not continue in this state, but sinned against God. And this was not a trifling matter, as it is often supposed. Many unbelievers rise up against the Bible and say, 'How strange that a benevolent and gracious God should pronounce such a judgment upon men, only for a simple act of disobedience !' But it was not such a simple matter. The question was, whether God was to have dominion, or not—whether man was to be constantly in a state of rebellion, or the God of heaven have rule over him—whether God's Word was to be depended upon, or not. After that God said, "Thou shalt surely die," and Satan had stood forth and said, "Thou shalt not surely die," the matter needed to be settled, whether the word of God was unchangeable as Himself. If, when God said, "Thou shalt surely die," He had not fulfilled His word, His character as a just God and as a God of truth would have fallen to the ground, and He could not have been God. It was, therefore, a momentous matter. Man fell. And after his fall, you find that God still identified him

with this creation. The curse pronounced upon him was, that this earth should be cursed for his sake, that it should bring forth "thorns and thistles," and that he should eat bread "in the sweat of his face, until he returned to the dust, for out of it was he taken, and to it he should return."

A remedy was then provided; "the Seed of the woman" was to "bruise the serpent's head;" and this promise was a star of hope to the children of men from the beginning. We find that when Noah was born, his father Lamech said, as we read in the fifth chapter of Genesis—"This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." It is evident that he expected a relief was to come, through the seed of the woman. We are then told, that after man multiplied and increased on the earth, there was a great deal of wickedness manifested by him: "the earth was filled with violence," we read; which shows that although there was no government to oppress, no aristocracy to be looked upon with jealousy and envy, and none of those evils of which men now complain, yet there was quite evil enough within the breast of man himself to manifest that wickedness, which caused the whole of the inhabitants of the earth to be corrupted in such a manner that God Himself declared, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The word (*chumas*), that is rendered "violence" in our translation, is in the original even more expressive; it implies also robbery and fraud. The antediluvians became defrauders of one another. Although there was at that time so much space, in which they could spread out wherever they pleased, we may fairly infer, that they must have congregated together in large masses. Had they not done so, this evil would not have been committed by them; however wicked and sinful against God they might have been, yet we cannot suppose that they would for mere pleasure and amusement have ill-treated each other, unless there were some cause prompting them. The evil, therefore, which so strongly marked the antediluvians, I conceive to have been occasioned by their dwelling together in large masses. Instead of making use of the creation which God had placed before them, spreading to the right hand and to the left, they were congregated together; consequently, various evils soon manifested themselves, and instead of being "fellow-helpers one of another," they became injurious to each other. And the flood came, and swept them away; and God's creation was to be peopled anew by the descendants of Noah.

Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. At the end of the ninth chapter of Genesis a curse is pronounced upon Ham. At the twenty-fourth verse we read—"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan: a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem: and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." We have here a very interesting lesson. One of the sons of Noah had acted unkindly and ungenerously towards his father; even in this early stage of the history of the world, we find that the act of dishonour done to the father had been so displeasing to God, that he permitted Noah to utter this curse, and caused it to take effect, that it might be a lesson for generations to come, that a son should not dishonour a parent with impunity. We find that these remarkable statements were fulfilled. The descendants of Noah multiplied and increased, according to the description given in the tenth chapter of Genesis. Ham peo-

pled Egypt and Babylon, and Shem peopled Syria Proper—that part which was afterwards termed peculiarly the land of Judah, or Judea. The descendants of Japheth went far west, and are supposed to have been the first who peopled Greece, and the western parts of the world. But how came this to pass? You have, in the eleventh chapter, an interesting account of it. The descendants of Noah had a project, (seemingly proposed by Nimrod, one of the descendants of Ham, upon whom the curse was pronounced,) to build a city and a tower for centralization. “lest,” said they, “we be scattered upon the face of the earth.” Their object was to act over again the same evil which had been committed by the antediluvians, on account of which so much corruption manifested itself, and the flood came and swept them away. We are told that God was displeased with this undertaking, and He came down and confused their speech, so that they could not understand one another, and consequently were defeated in their undertaking. From thence we find that Mizraim, one of the descendants of Ham, went into Egypt; from which the Hebrew name for Egypt is to the present day Mizraim. Nimrod, the first king of Babylon, remained stationary there, with his descendants, and laid the foundation of that great kingdom. Among those who were the projectors of the Tower of Babel were evidently many of the descendants of Shem also; and consequently, that part which we now call Palestine, or the land of Judea, was very thinly peopled, for many had gone away towards the land of Shinar, or Babylonia.

We have then an account given of the emigrant who had been directed by God to emigrate into that part which was to have been peopled by Shem, but which had not been entirely peopled, on account of the dispersion of the builders of the Tower of Babel. God commanded Abraham, who had dwelt in the land of Ur of the Chaldees, to leave that country, and to go into the land which He would show him. Abraham, therefore, together with his servants, Terah his father, Sarah his wife, Nahor his brother, and Lot his nephew—(a company amounting probably to about two thousand souls, as we are told that Abraham himself had three hundred and eighteen fighting men)—left their own land. These are the first emigrants we read of in the Scriptures, who were directed by God himself to emigrate—and I may say, Abraham was a model for emigrants in the future history of the world. Meanwhile, Nahor settled in Haran, in Mesopotamia, on the way from Babylon to the land of Judea, as it is now called, and consequently peopled that part; while Abraham settled in that land which afterwards became the land of promise. You will say, ‘Why, there was famine in the land immediately after Abraham entered.’ True; but what was the reason? Abraham went there with about two thousand souls; the land was very thinly peopled, and only cultivated sufficiently to produce that which the people wanted, and Abraham coming at once with so large a company, there was no provision for him; he needed a year before he could reap the fruit of his labours. And therefore he had to go into Egypt to buy corn for himself and family, and probably for seed. When Abraham’s cattle increased and multiplied, and his servants found that there was not sufficient food for both his cattle and Lot’s, Abraham said—‘There is the land before us; we must not crowd together, and press one upon another: if there is not sufficient for us on this spot, go you to the right, and I will go to the left; or go to the left, and I will go the right; let us not strive together, let us live as brethren; go and dwell where you and your cattle can be supplied, but

let us not oppress one another,' And so Abraham remained, and Lot went towards Sodom. Now this again proves to you, that the land could not have been thickly peopled ; or else how could a man go and settle down at once, with a large number of cattle and servants, and say, ' Here I am ? ' It is quite sufficient to prove, that it was providentially arranged that the land which was to have been peopled by the descendants of Shem, but was not so because of the project of the Tower of Babel, was now to be more fully inhabited through Abraham being called to go into that land and settle there.

In proceeding further with the history of Scripture, we find that God had providentially taught people to consider, that this earth was not to be looked upon as abandoned, but that He takes cognizance of it, and deals with men upon this creation with righteousness and judgment. In that land to which I have referred, the people became so divided, that each little village was looked upon as a kingdom, and each town as a still larger kingdom ; and at last the division became such, that the people probably did not know one another, and consequently were estranged and at enmity. God sent a famine among them, which may have been the means of first bringing them together. The famine made them feel—' Ah ! we are still brethren ; the same hunger that wastes me, wastes this man also ; he is my brother.' And men who had not looked at one another, though they lived but a short distance apart, had to meet in the waste and howling wilderness, to look one another in the face, to receive one another with kindness, and to journey along together for food, that they might not perish with hunger. This, you observe, was also a lesson to them, that they were not to be estranged from each other in the manner they had been ; and also, that when they had plenty, they were not to be extravagant and wasteful, while the earth yielded her increase unto them—that they were not to consider that every year must of necessity bring them forth abundance, but should be economical, and lay up from one year to another ; but above all, He taught them to know that He ruleth on the earth, and that He brought these judgments upon them that they might remember that they had a Father in heaven whom they should honour.

We find, moreover, in the Scripture history, that the judgments which God brought upon nations tended to advance His purpose in peopling the waste places of the earth. When Israel sinned, God brought judgments upon them,—He brought them into captivity to Babylon, He scattered them also among nations and people, and by this means brought from the east towards the west inhabitants who were in their persons to be representations of God's righteous judgment upon nations, and at the same time also they were to teach the nations that God takes cognizance of nations as such, and that He deals with nations nationally, as well as with individuals individually. Israel's captivity in Babylon was of great use in introducing the knowledge of God into a quarter where it had been almost entirely lost sight of. Babylon had become a seat of idolatry, and there it was that the great undertaking of Nimrod had been manifested again as far as possible, and Babylon became a centre for the meeting together of all the nations of the earth. We are told that men of all the kingdoms of the earth were called upon by the king of Babylon to fall down and worship his image ; which shows that Babylon was a great city, which became crowded not only with its own inhabitants, but from people congregating in it from all parts of the world. It was there that Daniel had to bear testimony for the truth of God, and there it was that

he uttered the predictions not only of what was to be the fate of Babylon, but gave a sort of historical sketch, first of the downfall of Babylon, then of the rise of the Medes and Persians, of the rise of the Grecian kingdom and power, then of the Roman ; and he proceeds after that to describe in prophetic vision the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, relating the state of those kingdoms, and ultimately the rising up of the great kingdom of God, which is to be made manifest. Now what I wish to bring before you is this—that the scattering of the Jews was not merely a judgment upon themselves, but it was to be the means of introducing the knowledge of God into a portion of the world that had become thickly populated. Thus the Babylonish records, in which the descriptions given of Daniel's vision or interpretation of the king's dreams were found, must have been read by the Medes and Persians, and so have been taken possession of afterwards by the Grecians, who were, as is generally believed, the descendants of Japheth, who went into the west. I mention this simply to show, that the destinies of nations and the various providential arrangements among nations and people are not to be looked upon as mere accidents ; but that God wishes us at all times to consider that the families of the earth are noticed by Him, and that this world is to be inhabited by men according to His providential and wise arrangement.

These Greeks, or the Grecian kingdom, connected the western portion of the world with the eastern, and the Greek language became so familiar, even to the Jews, that their Scriptures were translated by them into that language ; and thus about two hundred and sixteen years before Christ, the descendants of Japheth were the instruments of conveying the revealed Word of God from the east into the west, so that the western world became acquainted with God's dealings with the nations.

Then, again, the Roman power was to rise up. This reached still further west ; and becoming very mighty, we find that one thing in which it particularly manifested itself was the construction of roads. It did more by this for the uniting of people, than almost anything else. By means of these roads they could with more facility march their armies, convey their ammunition, and conquer in every direction. Nevertheless, this was overruled for a great end ; because it was the means of linking together nations and people that would otherwise have been separated. The conquests of the Roman power produced an extraordinary change in the whole of the affairs of Europe. And for what was all this ? It was preparatory to the peopling of those parts of Europe which had previously been but thinly inhabited, and bringing from the east to the west knowledge and information. This great country of Britain, the mart of the world, and the teacher of mankind, would have remained a desolate and barren island, had not God, in His providence, led some of the inhabitants of the neighbouring continent to emigrate to it ; and the whole of its population may be looked upon as a population that was at first planted here by a few emigrants.

From these considerations we may gather, I think, a few interesting and practical lessons.

I begin with the fact, that Christianity itself was first spread by emigrants. God compelled the disciples to be emigrants. They did not wish to leave Jerusalem—they congregated together—they would have preferred to remain there, and to enjoy their homes ; but God brought trials upon them, and compelled these disciples, through persecution, to go whithersoever they could ;

and we are told that wherever they went they made known the glad tidings of salvation. Therefore it was, that Christianity spread with such rapidity. The hearts of these emigrants were full of the love of their Redeemer; their desire was to make all their fellow-creatures happy wherever they went; and consequently they became a great blessing to the Western world. And Christianity is the only system adapted for a purpose of this kind, even if we look at it only after the manner of men. The Jewish economy consisted of altars and sacrifices that could not easily be carried from one part of the world to another; men could not, when leaving Jerusalem at a time of trial, take with them their priests, their altar and their temple. The heathen systems, also, were encumbered with temples, and altars, and priests, so that they could not go and spread their doctrines in different parts of the world. It was Christianity alone, that could come forth, in all its majesty and glory, declaring unto man the love of God, and telling him that wherever he goes he can carry with him his altar, his sacrifice, his Redeemer, his high priest, his God. Thus Christ, we are told, came "in the fulness of time," "made of a woman, made under the law." When the world began to be teeming with multitudes of people—when population was increasing, then it was that Christ appeared: God gave to men this holy and blessed religion, which is suited to "Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free"—whether to the Eastern inhabitant or to the Western—to the dark Ethiopian, as well as to the fairer inhabitant of the Western world. All of them could share alike in the deep sympathy and tenderness of this one Redeemer, who "made Himself," for man's sake, "of no reputation," and identified Himself with all the affairs of human woe, that He might become our Redeemer upon this earth.

Christianity, then, is a system suited to the time in which it first sprung up, to every age in the history of the world, and I may say, above all, to our present time. Let us look a little into our own history, and we shall see something similar to the persecution at Jerusalem, and its consequences. When America was first discovered, people did not think of emigrating there. But when persecution arose in England, the best, and choicest, and noblest spirits left their country, sailed away from it; and a happy day was it for America, when the May-Flower landed some of our inhabitants there, who became the foundation of that country's greatness. And now America, a land that less than a century ago was of scarcely any importance, at least in the eyes of Europeans, has become of very great importance to the inhabitants of Europe, by its commerce, by its enterprise, and by all its activity and power; and Europe can now look at America with an expectation of deriving from her very considerable benefits. Before this, our government did not consider for what end America had been given to Britain in the providence of God. It was not as something to gratify her ambition, or as a mere receptacle to which she might transport the evil-doers of her population; but God has destined that land to stand up, and to tell England, 'It is not as a habitation for thieves and vagabonds that God has created me; I also am created as God's earth, and I desire to have some of God's noble children to dwell upon me.' Then look at Australia, where there are thousands of acres of land—a brilliant sky, far superior to ours, and a delightful climate, but still lying waste, because there is no one to till the ground. God has given this land to England: is it to be made use of, or not?

You will say, 'Well, it is so; there are these lands; what are we to think of

them? First, why should we emigrate? what is the call?' If we look around, and find poverty, and wretchedness, and distress pressing down our fellow-creatures, and if much of this is to be traced to an over-crowded population, is not this a plain intimation that *some* should emigrate? But I may go on more systematically.

And first, if you ask me what is the call, I answer, your own children, if you have not the means of providing them education and that which they need, have a right to claim that you go with them where you can provide for them and bring them up as you ought to do. It has come to pass in this land—in this Great Britain, that is looked upon with envy by all the nations of the earth, that there are many fathers and mothers whose hearts are filled with misery and sadness when a child has been born unto them. It has come to pass that we cannot understand the language of the hundred-and-twentieth Psalm, which is repeated at the churaching of women—"Blessed is the man who hath his quiver full of them:" many are disposed to think it a curse to have their quiver so filled. It has come to pass that the only use children are considered to serve is as a means of earning or extorting money.

I need not enter into all the details, with which our feelings are constantly shocked in the public journals, of barbarities practised even by mothers towards their own children, how they are maimed, starved, made to stand half naked, shivering with cold, in the streets, in order to excite compassion, and draw forth the charity of the passers-by. And how comes all this to pass? Are the hearts of these mothers worse by nature than those of the tenderest mothers in the land? Assuredly not. But wickedness has hardened the heart and deprived it of every tender feeling; and much of this excess of wickedness may be traced to extreme poverty, and the reckless and abandoned habits which such excess of poverty induces. Nor will I speak of those wretched parents who live by the sacrifice of their youthful daughters, who deliver them up to a fate worse than that of being made to pass through the fire to Moloch. How awful that such things should exist in this enlightened nineteenth century!

But I must proceed to notice another of the evils which the over-crowded state of our population has led to; I mean the condition into which trade has fallen in this country at large, and more especially in this great metropolis. This also calls upon us to consider whether emigration be not absolutely necessary. It has come to pass, from our being congregated together in such masses, that we are pressing upon one another; and if one tradesman is going on maintaining himself, though it be with hard toil and labour, he is sure in a short time to have two or three rivals close upon him; and if they have more property than he, they will endeavour to undersell him, offering their goods at immense sacrifices, in order to crush and get rid of their neighbour, that they themselves may be established. We cannot walk the streets without having our attention attracted many times to the announcement of "awful sacrifices" being carried on. We are tempted to smile at the absurdity of the terms employed; but alas! it is no matter for laughter; it is indeed an awful sacrifice of principle, of property, and of good faith; entailing ruin and misery, not only on him who perpetrates this sacrifice, but on those who trusted him with the goods he thus fraudulently disposes of.

But wherefore should it be thus? Does it give pleasure to any man so to oppress his neighbour? Is there in man a real and heartfelt pleasure in the

mere act of injuring and supplanting his neighbour? No; envy or strife might call forth feelings of this kind; but these are not the ordinary feelings of men—it is simply the great pressure that brings this to pass. Here is a man that has a family to maintain; he wishes to bring them up as a respectable tradesman should. He has a few hundred pounds, but these do not go far. He must make a show in outward appearance, which eats up nearly all his capital; and having done this, he then finds that he is obliged to have recourse to forced sales, whereby to keep up credit; and so he tries to get on, ruining at the same time his neighbour, and doing mischief in every direction; and at last you see his shop closed—he also is ruined. But this is not the only evil. The tradesman is so occupied by the continual pressure, that his brain is day after day speculating in what way to force the sale of the day so as to be able to quiet the demand of some creditor, so that his soul is bowed down within him; and though he may have some measure of religious feeling, instead of sitting quietly to hear an animating discourse on the Sabbath, he is glad when it is such that he can sleep comfortably under it. He likes the Sunday to be a day of lethargic stupor, rather than of calm rest and refreshment of spirit. Now if this man, with his few hundred pounds, bought a few acres in Australia, and settled down with his family, saying, “Let us all work, and live as we ought to do, neither defrauding God nor man,” how much happier would he be!

Look, further, at the class of mechanics and labourers. Alas! if you were to make a tour through this metropolis, you could go into hundreds of houses, where you would be told—‘I want to do work, but I cannot get any; here are my children starving; I am to be turned out of my house and home; my furniture consists only of a few chairs and a table; my clothes are pawned; my children have scarcely anything to cover them;—what are we to do?’ Now you will hear this, not from those vagrants in the streets who seek to extort compassion, but from many a decent man, many a worthy and respectable character. Ah! is it so? Has it come to pass that the ox has his owner, and the ass his master’s crib to go to, but a poor brother man, a prince in the world, who was created by God as a great dignitary on this earth, is to move about in this great city, a city of palaces, a city of the merchants of the earth, not knowing where to get bread? Yes, it has come to pass. And poverty drives to many evils and degradations. You find that when a man once goes in tatters, though he may have been a well-educated man, he becomes degraded; and if he has not the high principle of religion to sustain him, he is capable of falling into any iniquity, arising from the despair which he is in, choosing death rather than life. Ought this to be so?

And now what is to be done? What is the remedy? Emigration.

You will say, ‘Who are to emigrate?’ All who are pressed by want, and cannot get what a human being has a right to expect. What has he a right to expect? Why, that if he work, he shall get food, clothing and shelter for it. It is altogether contrary to reason and to religion, that a man should say—‘I wish to work, I am ready to work with all my power, but I cannot get either work or bread.’ It must be wrong. This is a state of “violence,” which resembles something of the antediluvian state. It cannot be right, that while, on the one hand, there should be everything to gratify the senses, the feelings and the desires, there should, on the other hand, be teeming multitudes who are in this state of absolute despair. God is therefore crying with a loud voice—a voice

as loud as when He divided the tongues of those people, and told them that they must not congregate together into one great city, but must spread over the earth. He has therefore given us these distant lands ; He has given us ships in numbers beyond any other nation, so that we can convey our inhabitants to those lands ; and there is thus a voice from Heaven to all who can aid in the matter—that we should not see these thousands and tens of thousands of inhabitants perishing in the midst of us, without any one caring for their souls. I say caring for their souls, for both soul and body are ruined in the midst of this poverty and vice.

I will now, in conclusion, offer one or two very brief observations, as to the proper preparation for emigration.

First, those who wish to emigrate should not think, that because they are going to do so they may give themselves more to drunkenness and dissipation. No ; if you do, the Lord will smite you ; perhaps on your voyage, or perhaps when you land. It is not such worthless creatures that He wants to people that new world. First and foremost, if you are drunkards, if you are indulging in your fleshly lusts and passions, become sober. If you have not thought of God, begin to think of Him now. It is God's earth to which you are going. We want you to be sober—to be religious. God's earth must be peopled with godly people. Your children should not be left running about the streets, as if anything were good enough for Australia, or New Zealand. Contrariwise, not a day, not an hour should be lost by you. Send your children to those Infant Schools, which God has providentially opened for them, where they are taught, as soon as they can lisp the name of Jesus, to know that they have a Friend in heaven, who loves them tenderly. And if you yourselves are not able to read, there are adult schools, where kind individuals are willing to instruct you. Above all, lose not an opportunity of acquainting yourselves with the Gospel of Christ. See how beautifully it is adapted to your circumstances. Wherever you go, you can carry your religion with you ; your Redeemer and your High Priest will accompany you. We are very different from the state in which we should have been, if we had been without Christ, as in the days of the Roman power, when every nation and kingdom had their own tutelary gods. The Lord is our God. The text which I have taken is beautifully illustrative of this idea. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen : in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Wherever a man can find a grave, he is to find also an altar for the Lord. And thus, dear friends, suppose a number of you were to sail away to Australia : you might, on landing, fall down upon your knees, under the open heaven, with your families, like Abraham upon his first entering the place to which God called him to emigrate. Each family of you might be a model church ; your altar being "an altar of earth," your sacrifice and your sympathising high priest being the Son of God, your Father the God of heaven, who is the God of Britain and the God of all the earth. And thus, even in a short time, many thousands may enter that land, and look back upon England with feelings of sympathy ; offering up prayers for us, and we offering our prayers for them ; no more divided, either in tongue, or in thought, or in heart, or in worship ; one God, one faith, one hope, one Lord.

RESCUING SOULS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY WOOLNETH, LOMBARD STREET,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Langbourne Ward Charity Schools.

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—Jude 22, 23.

EVERY clergyman must feel, when addressing either his own congregation or an assembly of strangers, that there is in all probability great diversity of character amongst his hearers, and that if there be, it is necessary that there should be also diversity in his methods of attack. He may be sure that there is a mixture of converted and unconverted men; for the growing together of the wheat and the tares is to be a characteristic of the visible church up to the close of the present dispensation. And here is a great difficulty for the minister. He has to endeavour, according to the direction of the apostle, "rightly to divide the word of truth;" and we need not show you how different are the gifts which such a division, if well performed, must require. Yea, and even if he had to deal with only one class of character, exclusively with converted men or exclusively with unconverted, the minister would find scope, we should rather say need, for various gifts, showing how the one broad distinction of the converted and the unconverted consists with a hundred lesser differences which must be taken into account if a man would adapt his preaching to all his hearers in succession. We shall not speak of diversities amongst converted men; it is sufficient to remind you that St. Peter and St. Paul and St. John differed as much, the one from the other, after their conversion as before it. They did not lose their distinctive points of natural character through that great moral renovation of which they had been the subjects, but, on the contrary, manifestly retained their respective peculiarities, so that what they were by nature, gave form and feature to what they were by grace. And of course if men after conversion may differ from each other in as many points as they did before, they still require different modes of spiritual treatment, in place of presenting to the minister precisely the same case. But it is the case of unconverted men, which is brought before us in our text,—and here the necessity for different powers in the minister is distinctly affirmed, seeing that it is enjoined that men should be differently dealt with, some being gently and others roughly handled according to their peculiar dispositions and circumstances. It is not, indeed, exclusively to the minister that St. Jude here addresses himself; he is rather speaking generally of the course which Christians should follow in regard of those who had been seduced by false teachers. But undoubtedly his directions must be considered as peculiarly addressed to the pastors and ministers of the church, to those whose special business it is to endeavour to bind up the wounded, and to reclaim the wandering. Hence the text goes directly to the establishing what we have just now supposed, namely, that a minister may have need of different powers in dealing

even with one general division of mankind. If he speak only to unconverted men, he must not speak to all alike; he must vary his tone, being here gentle and compassionate, and there vehement and indignant. Blessed be God, we are told that "the excellency of the power" is not of ourselves; otherwise we might well exclaim—"Who is sufficient for these things?" and shrink in despair from an office which requires as much of discretion as of boldness, and not more of courage than of delicacy.

But now, leaving these more general observations, let us address ourselves particularly to the directions of our text. You will see at once the divisions under which what we have to advance on those directions will naturally be arranged. The apostle speaks of two classes of persons, of some of whom the minister should "have compassion," of others whom the minister should "save with fear." We design to endeavour to examine in succession who these parties are, making, moreover, in each case certain practical remarks on the mode in which St. Jude directs that these parties should be treated.

Now we need hardly tell you, that, although it is only of one class that the minister is bidden to "have compassion," the meaning cannot be that he is not to compassionate any other class. Let him lay aside instantly the ministerial office; let him be pronounced utterly wanting in the very first qualifications for its due discharge, if there can be the sinner whom he does not pity, for whom he is not anxious, or whose danger does not excite in him solicitude. Of all men the minister is bound to have something of the mighty grief, the vast anguish, of the royal Psalmist who gave vent to his feelings in such expressions as these: "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because men keep not Thy law;" "Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law." Of all men the minister may be supposed thoroughly alive to the reality and the terribleness of the portion which awaits the ungodly. It is his office to proclaim God's wrath against sin; and who shall be sensible of the greatness of that wrath if not he who is expressly charged with the arraying it before transgressors? Of all, therefore, who are in danger of perishing the minister must "have compassion." He would be wanting in the sensibilities of a man, to say nothing of those which his very office is adapted to cherish, if he could be indifferent to the condition of a single transgressor, whether just seduced into evil, or long hardened in rebellion against God. And hence it cannot be the design of St. Jude to divide sinners into classes, for one of which the minister is to feel compassion, but not for the other. He must be referring to a different treatment rather than to a difference in sentiment. All are to be regarded with a feeling of pity, but all are not to be treated with the same mildness and the same forbearance. And yet whilst there is a great sense in which every sinner is to be an object of compassion, undoubtedly the characters and circumstances of some are more adapted to the exciting pity than those of others. We may tremble for all because aware that all are in the high road to destruction, yet there may be some out of the mass over whom we are inclined to shed tears, while others move us rather to a righteous indignation. It will be easy, by adducing a few simple instances, to shew you whom the apostle would have us especially compassionate. For example: behold that young person whose family is irreligious, who, with perhaps a secret sense of the necessity of providing for the soul, is laughed out of all seriousness by those who ought to urge him to piety, carried to amusements which are only fitted to confirm him in enmity to God, and initiated in practices which can issue in nothing but habits of sin. I could not treat that young person sternly; I could not fail, in my intercourse with him, to bear in mind his peculiar disadvantages; and, though it would be my duty to remonstrate with him on the madness of allowing others to make him miserable for eternity, the very tone of my voice

must show that I "spoke in sorrow," not "in anger," and that I could weep over one who had so much against him in the saving of his soul. Or, behold, again, that man in distressed circumstances, on whom are pressing the cares of a large family, and who is tempted to gain the means of subsistence by practices which his conscience condemns—Sunday trading, for example. Could I go to that man in harshness and severity? I must not indeed spare his fault; I must not allow that his difficulties are any excuse for his offence; but really when I think on his peculiar temptations, and perhaps hear the cry of his young ones who are asking for bread, you surely will expect me to feel great concern for the man, and to shew it by the manner in which I reprove his misdoing. Or, behold, again, the servant of a dishonest master, commanded to do wrong and threatened with the loss of place if he shall presume to do right. Here is a case for great compassion. Perhaps there may have been little instruction in duty, and even if the judgment be informed there is required no ordinary courage to act on its decisions. What am I to do here? I must not extenuate the crime, I must not speak lightly of the danger; but nevertheless, in regarding a servant thus disadvantageously circumstanced, placed, as it were, on a rough sea in a leaky vessel, I can hardly fail to have pity the predominant feeling, and to prove by my whole manner my thorough commiseration. And, besides such cases as these, there are practices of whose dangerousness we may be hardly aware, compliances which seem to us innocent, though a better taught mind would see them to be sinful inadvertences which may be laying the foundation of habits, so that by a sure, though unperceived process, an individual may pass from an occasional indulgence to an inveterate slavery. Here, again, our compassion is excited. We know very well how easy it is for a man to deceive himself in the beginnings of sin, how many things commonly conspire to facilitate the entrance on an evil course, and to hide from him its enormities; and whensoever, therefore, we see a man just venturing his foot on a forbidden path, we would address him in the language of the text: language which should show that we make every allowance for what might be called the naturalness of his habits, even as we should if we saw him entering a field the flowers round whose margin gave him no warning of the fatal marsh into which he would soon sink. Or look again—and here we have the precise case contemplated by St. Jude—a man of no very strong intellect and of no very great reading is thrown into the society of sceptics, men, perhaps, of brilliant powers and of no inconsiderable acquirements. He will be no match for these apostles of infidelity. His little stock of evidence on the side of Christianity will soon seem exhausted or confuted; he will not be able to detect the falsehoods, or to expose the sophistries, of the showy reasoners; and presently by a very natural, though unfair process, he will be disposed to conclude that what he cannot prove wrong must be right. Towards a man thus seduced our prevailing feeling will be compassion—a feeling which you cannot expect us to extend towards those who seduced him, except in the broad sense that we are aware of their danger and would snatch them from ruin. There is hardly a case with which we would deal more gently, with more manifestations of genuine concern, than that of the man who, removed, probably, from the conversation of friends and advisers, is brought into the company of infidel and sceptical men, and tempted because he cannot answer their arguments to conclude them unanswerable. We are so well aware of the intense difficulties of his position, of the tendency of the mind, especially when just beginning to inquire for itself, to adopt theories which promise independence of the prejudices or the errors of mankind, that we cannot but try to aid him as we would the mariner turned adrift amongst quicksands with compass out of order and chart half-defaced. We have no such feelings

towards him as towards the hardened infidel. We would thoroughly pity him, we would bitterly weep for him, and whilst we would throw no disguise over the perils of scepticism, but would emphatically declare that in putting away from him the anchor of Christianity he ensures his going down at last in the whirlpool of perdition, yet we would let it be evident from the whole strain of our conversation that we were as much aware of his difficulties as of his dangers, and that an affectionate regard for his well-being, combined with a great sense of his peculiar temptations, had dictated the treatment which he received at our hands.

So that if there be amongst you the man or the woman who can only please God by displeasing relatives, or in whose case the profession of religion seems likely to shut up the channels of subsistence, or who is unavoidably associated with those who half force him to be sceptical, or who is living upon what we may call the border-line where vice takes the place of virtue, why we would not class that individual with the reckless and the obdurate, who are sinning with a high hand, and "doing despite to the Spirit of grace." Indeed, we must be faithful with you all. There are degrees of wickedness; there is no degree so small but that, if persisted in, it will land a man in hell. There may be circumstances which extenuate sin: there are none which, if it be not repented of and forsaken, will secure you from punishment. This is a very awful consideration, and should make the minister the more anxious to leave no fault unnoticed. There is no warrant in Scripture for supposing, but all the reverse, that a man can sin too little to incur eternal wrath. But without disguising the nature of sin, of whatever degree or complexion, we may still show that we feel a difference between sinners, just as the physician between patients, who may be all sick of diseases which tend directly to death, but who require, nevertheless, very different remedies. And there are gentle remedies which we would try with those whose cases we have endeavoured to describe. We feel for you, however we may hate your sin. The Redeemer Himself feels for you. He knows your dangers and your difficulties—in how attractive a form temptations come—how much you will have to give up, how much to encounter, if you come boldly out and embrace His discipleship; and He bids me speak to you with all tenderness; He bids me tell you that He will smooth the way if you will only attempt obedience, and make up to you a hundredfold all that you surrender, and be to you in place of father and brother and sister and mother, and give to you a mouth and a wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to gainsay or resist. This is our message to you. Go not away and say that Christianity is harsh and repulsive. You shall have our entreaties, if they will move you to the forsaking sinful practices; you shall have our expostulations, our affectionate expostulations, if they will induce you to take the Saviour at His word; you shall have our tears, if they will soften you to have mercy on yourselves. Oh! go not, then, away, and represent the ministrations of the Gospel as conducted without regard to that very touching precept of the text, "And of some have compassion, making a difference."

But it is time that we advanced to the consideration of the other part of the apostle's directions. There is to be stern treatment as well as gentle. "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." There can be no very great difficulty in deciding what are the cases which St. Jude may be supposed to have here had in view. They are the cases of hardened and reckless men, of the openly dissolute and profane,—men living in habitual sin and showing an unblushing contempt for the authority of God. Or—for we must not leave you to suppose that there are none among yourselves who require harsh treatment—the apostle refers to men who cannot possibly be in any doubt as to the wrongness of their conduct, who cannot plead ignorance, in excuse, or the suddenness

of temptation, or the pressure of circumstances, but who, having a decided preference for impurity, a settled determination to gratify their passions, or aggrandise their families, pursue a course against which conscience remonstrates, and of which they would not themselves venture to advance any justification. Are there none such in the present assembly—men whose case is all the worse because they are not wholly inattentive to the forms of religion, but just give so much attention to its ordinances as may suffice to keep them easy in doing violence to its spirit? Are there none with whom gentle treatment would be quite out of place, whom we must deal with as men fast asleep in a burning house or a sinking ship, with whom therefore a mild measure would be lost, and who, if roused at all, must be roused by the rough assault and the shrill cry? There are young persons here, who are conscious that they ought to “remember their Creator,” but who are determined to forget Him till they have enjoyed more of the world’s pleasures. There are elder persons here, on whom God has bestowed abundance, but who go on accumulating, as though covetousness were not “idolatry.” For anything I can tell, there are those who live in notorious sin—the slaves of base lusts, the partisans of what is dishonourable or dishonest, the propagators of infidel sentiments. Who is to assure me—am I to take appearance in the house of God as evidence—that I have none within hearing, who are habitually chargeable with gross vice, none whose dealings in trade would not bear the light, none who are guilty of presumptuous sins—sins which indicate a seared conscience, and threaten the utter quenching of the Spirit of the Lord? And how am I to deal, how am I to act, towards such men? Must I show them that I pity them? Oh! yes, that I pity them; for if ever men were within a hair-breadth of destruction, these are the men. But pity may be mixed with indignation. What mean you by thus persisting in iniquity? Is the Bible a forgery? is death annihilation? is hell a fiction? is heaven a day-dream? What mean you, young persons, with your delay; elder persons, with your avarice; men of pleasure, with your licentiousness; men of business, with your underhand transactions; men of argument, with your sceptical theories? We may pity you, but at the same time we hardly know how to keep down a righteous scorn. There is no excuse to be offered for you, no apology, no extenuation. And what treatment does the apostle bid us try with such? “Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Oh! beautiful words, notwithstanding all their harshness! The apostle speaks, you see, of “saving” these men. Then they may yet be saved. We are not to despair of any one amongst you; and we will not. We have yet again to bring to you the message of pardon; we have again to assure you that God willeth not the death of any sinner, but that so large are His mercies, so ample the arrangements which He has made through His Son for the pardon of the world, that He will not cast out the most hardened amongst you if only ready to close at once with the offers of the Gospel. Wonderful forbearance, wonderful loving-kindness! We are sent to you once more with the touching words—“Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?” But, then, whilst directed to make an effort to save you, and therefore assured that you are not past recovery, the terms are very peculiar in which the direction is conveyed. “Save with fear; pulling them out of the fire.” The apostle considers you as already in the fire. So perilous is your condition, he is so certain that the course in which you walk cannot fail to lead you to everlasting burnings, that he speaks of you as though you had taken the last step and plunged into perdition. And the expression goes even beyond this. It is of danger to the man who seeks to save, as well as of danger to the perishing man, that the apostle speaks. And you have here a fact which well deserves the being seriously pondered. We may say generally, that if our wish to convert the sinful brings us into intercourse with the sinful, there

is a risk of our learning their vices, whilst endeavouring to communicate our principles. Association, under whatever circumstances, with dissolute men, is full of peril. Our object may be the laudable one of giving advice and warning from the evil, but we ought to be on our guard as knowing the possibility that they may contaminate us whilst we are acting in the hope of purifying them.

But we must confine our observations to a particular case—the case which, if we may judge from the rest of the epistle, was chiefly in the mind of St. Jude. It is a service of danger to attempt the recovery of infidels and apostates, of men who deny the Christian doctrine, whether in whole or in part. It is like attempting to snatch men from the fire: it is just as likely that you will be burnt yourself as that you will succeed in drawing others from the flames. There is necessarily very great danger that in arguing with the sceptic you will imbibe sceptical opinions. Men have very little idea of the speciousness of infidelity in the hands of a subtle reasoner and objector, until they are actually brought into the intellectual contest. And we unreservedly hold, that it is the duty of most men, and especially of the young, to avoid, rather than to seek, the conflict. It is not the lot of every stripling to be called as was David, to go out against Goliath. But whenever the circumstances are different; whenever, on one account or another, it is a man's undoubted duty to take up the cause of insulted truth, and to defend it by argument rather than by expressive silence, it is at least to be gathered from the text, that he ought to enter on his task with the very reverse of rash confidence; with no doubt, indeed, of that truth for which he is about to contend, but with a consciousness that he may be sorely wounded in maintaining its cause. The evil is, that when a man has to enter on a theological argument he will often go to it in the same temper as though he were entering on a philosophical argument. It is not so much zeal for God's honour, or a longing for the salvation of the sceptic, by which he is animated, as an eagerness for intellectual collision, or a hope of exhibiting his powers as a reasoner. And God, who is a "jealous God," and who does not choose that His high attributes should be turned into a mere arena for mental gladiatorship, will probably confound the man who argues for Him as well as the man who argues against Him, causing the one to be hardened in his infidelity and the other to be shaken in his belief. I am sure that if I go into an argument simply because it is clearly my duty to expose erroneous statements, and with an honest and hearty wish to withdraw my fellow men from fearful danger, God will enable me, if not to overcome the adversary, yet to keep my own faith and my own principles uninjured. But if, on the other hand, through a mere fondness for controversy, without any true zeal for the glory of my Maker, or any deep concern for the souls of my brethren, I throw myself on every occasion into combat with scepticism or heresy, fighting for the truth of the Christian system just as I might for that of the Newtonian system, or for the divinity of Christ just as I should for the attractive power of the sun, there can be no cause for surprise if practically I receive harder blows than I give, if I find myself more assimilated to my adversary than my adversary to me. The only thing to be said will be, that I have brought injury on myself through wilful inattention to the maxim of the text, "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

Now there is yet another clause of the text, which, though it may not perhaps actually convey any new sentiment, is so strongly expressive as well to deserve from you special notice—"Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." We say that there is probably no fresh sentiment in this. The conveyed idea seems much the same as in the clause which we have just been reviewing; the only variation is in the image or the metaphor. You would

be very cautious in giving assistance to a man in a fire, fearing that yourselves might be burned. You would be equally cautious in giving assistance to a man seized with the plague, fearing that yourselves might be infected. If you had to apply a remedy in the case of a victim of this appalling malady, you would proceed with great circumspection; you would be afraid of the very clothes of the sufferer, thinking that they might possibly communicate the disease. Thus you would literally "hate even the garment spotted by the flesh." And this, according to St. Jude, is exactly what you ought to do in regard of those infected with heresy or vice. You should deal with them as with parties who cannot be approached without a risk of contamination; who are not only radically diseased, but to whom there can belong nothing which may not prove dangerous; language which is the dress of thought merely being brought ultimately to act as a conductor, so that secretly and stealthily you may get the poison into your veins. But whilst we allow that this "spotted garment" may denote much the same as "pulling out of the fire," we cannot fail to fasten on the expression as conveying certain lessons which we could hardly gather from the other. If there be an expression in Scripture which shews that nothing is to pass with us as an apology for sin—no adornment, no advantage, no grace, no talent—this is that expression. May it not often happen, for example, to a mercantile man, that he has an opportunity of engaging in some very profitable, but not strictly honorable speculation; that he may become very rich if he will be only a little mean, and that through some trick or evasion which is likely to be unobserved, or, if observed, not much censured, he may weave himself a fortune, or at least add greatly to his stores? If he yield to the temptation what will he have but a "garment spotted by the flesh?"—ample, it may be, in its folds, strong in its texture, but nevertheless, "spotted by the flesh," having on it a stain which the least approach to dishonesty communicates, and that too, indelibly? Or take another and a more literal case. Passion for dress has been, and continues to be, the ruin of thousands of females of the inferior ranks of life; for example, of servants. They wish for attire and for ornaments unsuited to their station; they will commit little dishonesties in order to have the means of gratifying the wish, not caring that then the coveted garment becomes terribly "spotted by the flesh;" ay, and frequently, more frequently, perhaps, than is commonly thought, they will lend an ear to artful seducers who minister to the passion for dress, and at last prevail on them to accept the combination of infamy and of finery. Even where the unsuitable dress has been honestly procured, it is only likely to attract the notice of those pests of society who are ever looking out for victims. It is "spotted by the flesh," because adapted to the exciting base passion; and many a woman who has become a scorn and an outcast, would have gone through life virtuously and happily, had she never bedizened herself with trinkets or flaunted in silks. The beautiful attire is that which comes out of the loom of modesty; and all other, by whomsoever worn, is raiment "spotted by the flesh," and therefore perilous to the wearers. It was a classic fable, that the mighty Hercules perished in frightful agony through putting on a poisoned garment; alas! in one form or another, the fiction is almost daily being turned into fact. Take another instance of the garment being "spotted by the flesh." When the garment is literature, and the flesh-spot is the infidel or licentious tendency of that literature, is not the sweetness of poetry often taken as an apology for its looseness, or the power of the style thought to redeem the profligacy of the sentiment? Ay, just because the garment has been woven in the frame of a very brilliant fancy, and is shot with the golden threads of imagination, and fashioned by the nicest rules of rhetoric, it is admitted into libraries—those wardrobes of the mind—from which it would otherwise be immediately excluded, as soiled by bad principles and stained by immorality. We call upon all, and

particularly upon the young, to show that in this respect they act on the apostle's maxim, and "hate even the garment spotted by the flesh." The melody of verse does but make more dangerous the looseness of sentiment, and fine writing may but give currency to licentious thoughts, and thus add pestilential character, and spread the evil influence of the spotted garment. What St. Paul said of certain heretics may be said of several celebrated, but dissolute, writers—"Their words do eat as doth a canker." If you will throw around the mind licentious poetry, because it happens to be singularly harmonious, we dare predict that you will become the slaves of sensuality. If you will fold the understanding in a sceptical dress, because it is singularly ingenious, we dare be sure that you will become the disciples of infidelity.

And now for a brief closing word of expostulation. On whom should we "have compassion" more than on poor children, who are growing up in ignorance and vice? Whom should we consider as in "the fire," needing to be pulled out with all vehemence and at all risks, more than the young of an immense city, with its unnumbered temptations to profligacy, its countless inlets to wretchedness and to vice? Oh! talk not of there being a heart in that man's breast, who can look without emotion upon children left without Christian instruction, advancing in years only to advance in wickedness, and fast becoming, through being abandoned to their own devices, the dread and the scourge of the community which neglects them. I do not think there is such a heart in any of you. We show you now a way of snatching many of these children from the fire. Here is a school, one of those good old-fashioned Church of England schools, which some would despise, but which I am prepared to uphold as among the best institutions of the land; for nowhere else is loyalty more unflinchingly taught—nowhere else are fidelity and honesty and charity and contentment more sedulously inculcated; the fear of Almighty God—and what other foundation is worth the name?—the fear of Almighty God being made the basis on which to rear the superstructure of duty to our neighbour. Here, then, is a school presenting the very best machinery for "saving" these children. Will you not uphold it? will you not assist it? These City Ward Schools, admirable in their constitution and most successful in their operations, have a very hard struggle to maintain. The wealthy citizens live at a distance from the city, and there is great danger, therefore, of the poor being neglected and forgotten. But you will show by your liberality this day, that the poor shall not be neglected, shall not be forgotten. Let every one in this crowded church remember that he is, perhaps, filling the place of some one who could not gain admission, and who would have given liberally; so that if he give nothing, or give little, a double injury is done to the charity—it is but half supported by him who is present, and it loses all the help of him who is absent. I call upon you to save the children of the poor around you—to save them "with fear." Yes, Sirs, with fear! These children, if let alone, will become as thorns to society. Then "save them with fear." But this is nothing. These children are immortal. Let them alone, and the probability is fearful that they will live and die ignorant of God and of His Christ; that, passing their days in contempt of the Divine law, they will sink down at last in the whirlpool of Divine wrath. Oh! then, "save them with fear." Snatch them out of the fire—out of the furnace here of shame and remorse, out of that burning fire hereafter which shall certainly be the portion of the impenitent and unbelieving.

MAN FALLEN, AND MAN REDEEMED.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. EDWARD THOMPSON, D.D.,

Incumbent of All Saints'.

PREACHED IN ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25, 1849.

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins : return unto Me ; for I have redeemed thee."—Isaiah xlii. 22.

IF it should please God to allow us to travel on to our threescore years and ten, and then in His mercy, to give unto us a lengthened *death-bed*, it would be utterly impossible to conceive anything more terrific or harassing to the soul, than the gathering up of unrepented sins, and placing the remembrance of them before the dying ! And if, at the same time, God were to recall abused privileges, lost opportunities, neglected means of grace, unheeded exhortations, slighted encouragements, and all the powers which had been used, to bring us under the influence of Divine truth, equally appalling would it be to us, while lingering under the eleventh hour of our existence. Nothing, under such terrors, could avert the most dangerous depression ; yet nothing could introduce consolation into the soul with greater efficacy, than some such cheering, animating and life-imparting assurance, like that contained in the words of our text. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins ; return unto Me ; for I have redeemed thee."

In the first instance, these encouraging words had reference to the pardon, which Jehovah granted to Israel. Israel frequently sinned, and God invariably, on their repentance, abundantly pardoned. Many a time did their transgressions hang over them "as a thick cloud," and as often were they "blotted out." The expressions here are beautiful ! Frequently have we beheld the gathered storm driven away by the wind, as it threatened to darken the sun, when shining in his might ; and often has Israel witnessed the smoke, rising up from the sin-offering, or from the incense, as it was curling its way towards heaven, and then being dispersed by a current of air and becoming invisible.

Longinus admired the sublimity of the sentiment in the following sentence of a well-known classic author (Demosthenes)—"This decree made the danger then hanging over the city pass away like a cloud."

The meaning of the verse then may be—"He who offered his sacrifice aright, was as sure that the sin for which he offered it was blotted out, as that the smoke of the sacrifice was dispersed by the wind, and was no longer discernible."

But although the verse before us, in the first instance, referred to the Jews, and especially to them during the captivity, yet we may apply it to ourselves, for our spiritual improvement, inasmuch as the *promise of pardon*, as well as the *exhortation to repentance*, are unto us and to our children for ever. The Israelites were typical of us, as a people, and their deliverances shadowed

forth, the full efficacy of redemption; and all their representatives, or sin-offerings were typical of that *One* great sacrifice, that was made on the cross, for the guilt of the whole world, consequently we may receive our text, as a consoling assurance, that God will pardon us, if we return unto Him—that He will blot out as a thick cloud, our transgressions, and as a cloud our sins, for He has redeemed us.

There are many parallel passages to our text—frequent allusions to sin as being a blot, or plague spot upon the human character, and as many to God's willingness to receive the repentant.

On this occasion, we have more immediately to deal with the text—there is sufficient in it, to suggest to us, very many observations and profitable conclusions.

We have observed, that sin is a blot upon humanity. And we know, that when once a blot or stain falls upon any pure material, or object, it requires considerable difficulty to wash it out: in fact, sometimes the attempt is fruitless, it becomes utterly impossible.

With regard to ourselves, we have *a blot* upon us. Adam sinned, and the plague spot instantly followed, and all his sons tell, in their nature, the evil consequences of the fall: this blot is natural sin, that which we engender from our first parent; but there is another sin, commonly called *actual sin*, that is, that which we commit in our persons—this sin also is a *blot* upon us. We may endeavour to wipe out either, but it is impossible! The Ethiopian, with all his *washing*, remains *black*!—the *leopard*, with all his shaking, contains his *spots*! As a general rule, we may say, *blots* upon purity, never can be erased by the human hand. If the novice attempt to chip the block of marble into life, even after it has received the execution of the perfect artist, it becomes instantly spoiled by the interference: if the brush of the painter be seized and dashed upon the highly executed portrait, the performance is lost to the admiring eye; nothing can restore the picture or the stature—in each case a blot has fallen upon it. If, in the peerless stream, the turbid water be turned, it is beyond the power of any to purify the flowings; as well might he attempt to crystallize the mountain wave, or bid it stand still, or throw the sun back, at his setting, into the glories of his mid-day light. Nature blotted, is nature corrupted! Man contaminated is man mortal! And man is contaminated with a virus, that has eaten its way into the very vitals of his constitution. All have sinned, and come far short of the kingdom of heaven; and yet a great sin it is, that *all men think all men sinful but themselves*. Humanity is such, that it too often fails to witness sin in person. Men judge their fellows; they condemn, they crush. But all have sinned; the judge himself has to account for sins equally black as his, upon whom he pronounces judgment; for he, who is guilty of one sin, is guilty of all; and he who breaks one of the least of God's commandments is as responsible as if he had broken all. So let not one say, *I am more righteous than another*, for all have by their nature of Adam sinned, and all have been guilty of *personal* transgression. A blot rests upon every man, and no man can blot it out; and never could it have been blotted out, had the Saviour not redeemed Israel, and the whole world. In His blood alone, sins are washed out. The price was high, but it was efficacious; His blood was received, as an atonement, as a sacrifice, *full* and perfect, and sufficient—satisfactory to God, and most consolatory to ourselves.

We have only to believe, that we have this blot upon us; that we are insufficient of ourselves to wipe it out, and to feel our weakness (which is the very first step to godliness)—we say we have only to do this, and then, like the ma-

riners in the storm, we shall look out for the Rock of safety ; or, like the prodigal in want, we shall long to return to our Father's home—yea ! very soon, under the cheering accents of our common Parent's voice, shall we, as He stands with open arms to receive us, recognise the all-sufficiency of the Saviour—of Him, who died for us, and rose again for our justification.

But let us with the view of appreciating the love of the Redeemer, examine why God was so willing to witness the return of the rebellious people to Him, why He manifested so much favour towards them, and on what account He blotted out their transgressions.

The Israelites were a disobedient people ; although the communication between them and God was *direct*, and although they had repeated and palpable manifestations of His existence, of His power and of His love towards them, yet they turned to the rude idol ; they worshipped the graven image, they drew down, in consequence, the anger and the jealousy of a justly offended God. How then did He act ? In His mercy He spared them ; but it was not through any merits of their own ; it was not through the offering even, which they made Jehovah for their sin, but it was through, by, and account of the pleadings of the Son of God, that they were spared, and that their sin was blotted out. The work of redemption had commenced, long before the Saviour took flesh and died upon the cross ; His love was exercising for the advantage of humanity previous to the atonement, which was to cancel the sins of the world. Yes ! When Adam sinned in Paradise death would have immediately followed, with all its terrors and ghastliness, had not the Son pleaded with the Father—laid His plans for the restoration of the fallen, and in the fulness of time promised to carry them out. The Son stood as a MEDIATOR between God and man. He reconciled the Father to the guilty child. He reigned in heaven as the Advocate of those, who had no power of themselves to return unto God : and then He descended upon the earth, and gave full proofs that He was the Messiah, the long-expected One, Jesus Christ the righteous, the Saviour of a fallen world. These facts, at once, give satisfactory answers to our inquiries, and at the same time show us how gracious and long-suffering, how merciful and kind God was to Israel.

But let us take a general view of the subject under our consideration. The text evidently contains three very important doctrines, namely, *man fallen, man redeemed*, and the necessity, of man co-operating with the means vouchsafed to bring him to God. Man fallen, the sins and transgressions alluded to in the text prove this—*man redeemed*, is shown, by the assertion, “ I have redeemed thee,” which also declares to us, that a man must be a fallen creature, otherwise there would have been no occasion for redemption. And the necessity of man co-operating with the means vouchsafed to bring us to God, is shown by the exhortation in the text—“ Return unto Me.” Several minor doctrines are also observable, but these, to which we have alluded, are the most prominent.

As *man fallen*, we look at the creature ; as *man redeemed* we are turned to the Saviour, and as man, using the means, to the Holy Ghost, who enables him so to do. And we are also brought to God, who accepts, and who still maintains His justice, even in the most extensive exercise of His mercy. The plan of redemption is marvellous ; the creature never could have conceived one so exalted ; the wisest or the purest among us never could have redeemed his own soul. None but the Son of God could have conceived it, no other could have carried it out. The mysteriousness of the two natures is even beyond the powers of the most spiritually minded man fully to conceive ; he can only look upon it, as through a glass darkly, but hereafter, all will be thoroughly

understood, and thoroughly appreciated, by the glorified creature, when he shall be mingling with the ransomed of the Lord.

The text before us, if rightly understood, is most *consolatory*, because it shows to us our position, by *nature*, and our position by *grace*.

Oh! brethren, what are we as fallen creatures? Can we, for a moment conceive a *beautiful city*, with its palaces, and its streets, crowded with people full of life and gaiety, and then the earth heaving, and throwing down in succession street after street, house after house, man after man, but leaving so much as to tell what the city once was? this scene might picture *fallen man*. Can we imagine a *palace* rising in costly grandeur, on which has been consumed ten thousand fortunes of the most wealthy, whose foundations bespeak a combination of *art* and *nature*, and then this noble structure suddenly, as if touched by the potent hand of some demon, falling into ruin? if so be, it may be a feeble representation of *fallen man*. Or can we contemplate a temple raised to the honour and glory of God—a temple with its perfect proportions, its solid foundations, its brazen or marble pillars, its bold arches and its enriched ornaments, its lofty spire, or its embattled towers, uplifting its majesty in grandeur, yet in humility to the honour of Him, to whom it stands hallowed? Can we look back upon such a building as we have seen, and then think of it either by storm, or by the enemy being thrown into embers, or into chaos, with the devout worshippers scattered, or with but few left to mourn over its former greatness? how the ruin might represent *fallen man*.

And if we were to go on in our contemplations, and think of a most luxuriant garden full of trees and shrubs exhaling their beautiful perfumes, and yielding to the hungry the most delicious fruit, and affording to all who trod upon its walks, and entered its recesses the quietest repose, and the most perfect security, and then this paradistical retreat, refusing, as if marred by the harpy's touch, to give its increase; if every fruit suddenly became marcid, every tree had on it a blight; if every flower impured or corrupted the air; and every walk had upon it the footsteps of death, and every border, in the place of the once admired lily or rose threw up the thorn or the thistle, how the change would remind us of *man fallen*—fallen from his state of excellence into dilapidation and ruin!

Or to speak in more truthful language without picture, imagination, or simile, think of a superior being, walking in the lovely scenes of Paradise—a state typical of heaven, one of matchless purity—without an evil thought, without a single dark passion, free and exulting in his virtues; glowing under the fire of untainted love, existing without a tear, living without *mental* or *bodily* pain—a being in the enjoyment of a companion as happy as himself—a being destined for eternity, “very good,” and with the image of God upon him, consequently *perfect* in every respect; blessed in all his movements, transcendent in every thought—think of him so exalted, so glorious, so marvellously created, so much a creature of the other world, so like God, and then in a moment all these *glorious* and *imparted* properties departing, and the eternal creature becoming subject to *death*: and now for glory we have degradation; for *exaltation* and *felicity* and *joy*, we have *misery*, *woe* and *toil*; for a beautiful garden, we have a wilderness; for a rose, we have a thistle; for all those noble faculties and principles and excellencies, and sweet and pure intercourse of feeling and thought, we have base passions, jarrings and contentions; and, more than all, for the upright creature, that we might suppose, would have been translated, without the bitterness of dying, we have *mortality* and *corruption*—Cain standing over his murdered brother! Abel the first victim of

sin, agonizing in never before seen gore! Adam grieving over the loss of his child! The blood of the *righteous innocent*, marking earth, as if to place a *greater curse* upon it, and the last cry of the dying, rising to the very throne of HIM, who *repented that he had made man!* We dwell not upon Adam's feelings upon this occasion, or upon the murderer's remorse—in both cases, the penalty of sin must have terrified the minds of each. Adam saw the effects of his disobedience. Cain saw the wicked result of his envious passion. There was surely something more than terror, in the sight of the first dead man—especially as he was a murdered creature! Adam might have stood amazed! horror stricken! aghast! Oh! yes, his soul must have sunk within him, when he looked, for the first time, *upon death*. There, might he have said—there is *death*—a *cold corpse*—a being, who once had life *now dead*—there is brought before me my own son dead, to show to me what is *death*. My sin is great, might he have said; had this child died from weakness, from a gradual decay, but oh! how more galling is my sin! how it tears my soul! how it saddens my hope! this child was murdered by his own brother! He, whom Eve my companion, my wife, loved—he, whose sacrifice God accepted, is thrown up before me, to show me, what death is. Here is indeed the effect of sin. Here is in me man fallen! Here is in my son, the wages of sin, DEATH!

But oh! alas! alas! this is not the only blood which has been shed upon the earth—"from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, who was slain between the temple and the altar, and from that event to the last murder, Adam's sin has been rising before us, and telling in terrific characters, the sad, the deplorable state of *fallen man*. Leaders and patriarchs, preachers of righteousness, and judges of the earth, prophets, and kings, all have in their own persons become evidences of fallen, degraded and mortal man. And in our own families, among our kindred and neighbours, we have witnessed death's threatenings and death's triumphs. The beautiful, the fair, and the strong have fallen before the stroke of the tyrant. The eye, lighted up with joy and gladness and animation, has sunk into the dull film of mortality; the limbs after a moment of quivering have grown suddenly cold; the heart has ceased its action, the hue of the cheek has fled when the spirit departed; the pulse is still; the blood is dried up in the veins; the firm grasp only yields the *senseless*, the *inanimate*, the *marble touch*—the soul or the spirit has returned to God who gave it, and we are left to mourn over *the fallen*. Too often for our happiness have we witnessed such a sight in the dark and melancholy chamber—too often indeed, for our joy, have we lingered over, and wept over, with bitter lamentations, the sad reality of fallen man!

But there is yet another spectacle, hideous in sight, humiliating, shuddering to behold! It is the receptacle of the dead: the gorgeous tomb, or the simple grave! Open the coffin lid of the high-born king, or the forgotten peasant; gaze on the contents as chilling as may be the sight—be not scarred at the corruption, or the mouldering of a fellow-worm; or if a skeleton present itself, think! oh! think—it is the *last*, though the fearful evidence of *fallen man!*

But let us turn from a subject so melancholy to contemplate, yet so necessary to be occasionally brought before us, to the more glorious, animating history of humanity—man redeemed! man, with his sins blotted out, as a cloud—man, the regenerated, the justified, the sanctified, and then the glorified creature of the Lord.

Now this consideration is not to be pictured: we cannot, as in the case of fallen man, see the reality: with respect to redemption, much as been done

much yet remains to be done. The ruins of the city suddenly thrown into, order and original beauty, were this possible, cannot convey to the mind the redeemed state of the fallen : the palace restored, or the temple repaired and beautified ; or the garden eradicated of the *thorn* and the *thistle*, and in their place the original productiveness, with a combination of art and nature—no ! not even were Eden to overspread the earth—no ! not even, were every tread to become a paradise—not even, were the original perfections of creation to be brought back—not even were angels to descend and ameliorate, under Divine power, the condition of earth, could be pictured or *emblemized* the state of Redeemed man ! Creation called forth the power of God, and throws marvel into the mind, as we contemplate its extent, its beauty, its perfection and its grandeur ; but REDEMPTION, in love, in wonder, in miraculous evidence of its truth, in all connected with it, is far beyond the most gifted and exalted mind fully to comprehend. The union of two natures, in one person, is a marvel ! God and man existing in Jesus Christ ! A perfect God and perfect man, yet not two, but one Christ—“one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God.” This is a sublime mystery ! One, only fully to be understood, when immortality and glory shall distinguish us in the realms above—far from all now, that clouds and disfigures humanity. But there are parts of the Divine scheme, which we can understand, and which we can fully entertain, under Divine aid, and be comforted. As sinners, we often feel the great burden of our guilt—the heavy weight, that crushes us to the earth—the chain, that binds us, as it were, to some dead body, and also tribulation, and woe, and occasionally the chilling warning, that we are but dust, and unto dust must we return. During these pressures, we look out for some relief—for some rock of safety—for some castle of defence, and we find Jesus—Jesus the Christ—the Rock of our salvation—the only One in whom we can trust. And whether it be in the storm or the calm—while wandering in the wilderness or resting upon our pillows, we hear the cheering invitation—“Come unto Me, all ye, who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” ‘I,’ yes ‘I, the Lord of life, your Advocate with the Father, your Saviour, “have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins : return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee.”’

The *invitation*, in our text, now demands our consideration. “Return unto Me.” Return, indeed, we could not, had not the Saviour pleaded—had He not *advocated* with the Father, and granted us permission so to do—in short, had He not atoned for the sins of the world, and left us, or rather sent to us power to return unto God. We have that power by the Spirit *preventing* and co-operating with us.

Now, let us examine, in what the *return* to God consists. When men become dejected, by the great body of sin, by trouble, or by feebleness, or by the prospect of an untimely death, they feel inclined, because they were reduced to an extremity, to cease their hold of the world, and then make an attempt to *return* to God ; but, alas ! although He may be merciful in the eleventh hour of our existence, we dare not conclude that there is true piety in this longing to return—we dare not venture to assure the applicant for mercy, that he is even in the way of salvation, and that simply, because he is driven to Christ by an emergency ; because he has felt a danger-approaching—there has been no love towards the Saviour—no gratitude for what He has done, no co-operating with the Spirit—but merely a trembling and an apprehension of punishment. This is not religion, because it is connected with fear—there has been no devotion, no humility, no confidence in mercy, no pure faith. Had

danger not approached, there would have been no thought of God. For the prodigal to be sincere in his return, there must have been a demonstration of his sincerity. He must have been moved, by very love towards him, who had done so much for him—he must have felt indwelling sin, and his incapability to root it out—he must have striven hard to have resisted temptation, however he may have yielded to it—he must have sought Christ, however he may have failed, to have found Him—he must have given some manifestations of truthfulness and a desire to enlist as a soldier of Christ—or all must have arisen from deception or emergency.

The return to God, surely is marked by the fruits of the Spirit ; the tree is bad, if it do not yield ; man is at enmity with God, if he do not adhere to the conditions of the Gospel ; if he do not use all the means of grace, and employ all the energies he is certainly capable of exercising. And what are the means of grace ? Surely we, as Christians, constantly have them before us. We need scarcely inquire, in what they consist ; yet to remind you, we may say, they are most assuredly, providential acts,—they are the advantages of participating in the ordinances of religion and the privilege of receiving all that the church of Christ has to bestow ; and of these, the administration of the sacraments, and the preaching of the Gospel in its full extension, are very prominent : but above all, the impartition of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed by a merciful God to aid us on in our journey through life ; to comfort us ; to co-operate with our endeavours to get to heaven and to abide with us for ever, and other encouragements graciously given, are the means of grace, which if rightly used, will secure our *return* to our Father's house. And we shall really begin to feel, that Christ has redeemed us ; for we shall find a marvellous regeneration to have taken place in the soul—we shall feel ourselves justified in the sight of God—we shall perceive, that we are growing spiritually strong, under the sanctification of the Spirit, and from these states, we shall joyfully progress, towards the glorified state in heaven. Oh ! man redeemed is a purified comforted creature ! Man pardoned is man taken into Divine favour ; his sins are blotted out ; the scarlet stain has been made like wool, and the spot red like crimson, has become white as snow. Brethren, with such powers and means of grace, which you have in possession, may we not invite you to *return*,—to return home ; to come out of that foreign land—from that wilderness of thorn and thistle, into one of promise, flowing with milk and honey—even unto Christ's kingdom now on earth ? It is not as if, we were calling upon the impotent man to remove a mountain ; it is not as if, we were cheering the soldier on to the battle unarmed ; it is not as if we were summoning the dead to appear before you in their grave trappings, all which would be impossible to be answered, but it is calling upon Christians to exercise their privileges, having capabilities so to do ; it is urging upon them a renunciation of sin ; an abandonment of evil habit ; an humble submission to Divine authority ; a reception of all the means of grace ; a striving to do all for the honour and glory of God, and out of love to His dear Son Jesus Christ. This is the call, and it is one, thank Heaven, that is not confined within these or any walls, but is heard at the same time, and by the same authority, over the whole of the Christian world. In the battle-field even, the sound of the Gospel is louder than the roar of the cannon ; the still small voice is far above the clash and the din of arms. It is heard oftentimes, when the tempest is most terrific, when the thunders are rolling horribly, when nature is convulsed, and death is carrying off his victims. It is heard in the busy scenes of life, and in the still and quiet chamber ; it is heard in the crowd and by the solitary pilgrim ; and

it is heard especially by the penitent sinner, and in such consolatory words as these—"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee." And brethren, can we refuse to obey that voice? Can we decline the invitation given, in such endearing language? Can we go on, sinking deeper and deeper in the world's turmoil and the world's vanities? Can we refuse to return home, for we are now sojourners and pilgrims as all our fathers were, knowing that God is in the desert waiting to meet us, with His arms outstretched to receive us, ready to rejoice over our efforts, and to encourage them by a successful termination? Oh! what is there in the world so charming? What yields us so much pleasure? What entices us from duty?—what binds us to the earth? It is the chain of sin, it is the cord, that Satan has thrown around us, by which we are tied and bound to the earth; yet remember, the "pitifulness of God's great mercy can loose us." Remember the humble and contrite, yet fervent prayer can be heard by Him, who is willing to blot out our sins, and to engraft into us fresh properties, and to breathe upon our souls, the blessing of everlasting life.

The battle is of an earthly nature, but the victory is immortal: the journey through life is probationary—the home is eternal! The body is but the shell of the jewel, but it is to be gathered up and repaired after corruption, and presented to the Lord in glory, spotless, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and thus made fit for the blessed and happy state of the redeemed.

MAN'S GLASS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW UNDERSHAFT, LEADENHALL ST.,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1849.

Before making a Collection on behalf of the Parochial Schools.

"For if any man be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass : for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—James i. 23—25.

THERE is a leading idea in each of the verses thus read to you ; and because these ideas are perhaps more striking when taken together, than when detached the one from the other, we may solicit your attention to the whole of this passage of Scripture, rather than to either of its separate parts. The ideas are the following :—the first, that the Word of revelation generally serves as a mirror or a glass, in which the natural man may see himself imaged ; the second, that he will be nothing advantaged by this reflexion of his features, if it do not make him active in the correcting and amending ; the third, that to him who is not only a hearer, but a doer, revelation becomes a " perfect law of liberty." You will readily see for yourselves that these ideas are the more prominent ones. In the first verse, St. James likens the mere hearer of the Word to " a man beholding his natural face in a glass ;" and thus he sets Scripture before you as a mirror, in which you may contemplate yourselves. In the second verse, by referring to the man as " going away and forgetting what manner of man he was," he implies that in spiritual, as well as in natural respects, we may be displayed to ourselves, and yet not be brought to the rectifying what we see to be wrong. And then, in the third verse, he speaks of a consistent Christian as " looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing therein," and thus gives to the Bible the very peculiar character of a " law," but that a law of absolute freedom. We have, therefore, to present you with three important and closely-connected truths : the first, that the Word of God is as a glass, in which we may see ourselves reflected ; the second, that we shall be nothing advantaged by this reflecting Word, unless we set ourselves to the acting upon its disclosures ; and the third, that by submitting implicitly to what is taught us by God's Word, we shall find that it becomes to us a " perfect law of liberty."

I. Now there are, as you will remember, expressions in Scripture which set before us the whole work, whether of creation or redemption, as one vast mirror, upon which we must gaze if we would learn the great truths which have to do with the nature of our God. Thus St. Paul, wishing to contrast our present with our future condition, says to the Corinthians—" Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." He means, as it would seem, that here we have no direct vision ; we see only as in a mirror—that is, by reflected rays,—creation and redemption both imaging Deity, but neither our faculties nor our opportunities permitting us to look upon God face to face.

And there is no doubt that in this sense the Word of God also is a mirror. God may be said to glass Himself in its pages ; and when we look on those pages, they give back to us with greater clearness than any other reflector the attributes and perfections of our invisible Maker. But it cannot be in this sense that St. James represents the Word as a mirror : it is as showing man himself, and not as showing him God, that revelation is here likened to a glass. The supposition is, that a man may place himself morally before the Bible, even as he may naturally before some polished surface, and learn with as much accuracy what are his lineaments or his features. And we may suppose that St. James refers to the same power in the Bible, as is referred to by St. Paul, when he describes himself and his fellow-workers in the ministry as "not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." He speaks, you observe, of a manifestation of truth to the conscience, and that not to the conscience of this or that individual, but of every man ; not only of those who should be converted by the preaching of the Gospel, but generally, of all who should be brought within its sound. Even where the heart did not yield, the conscience would be forced to allow the truth of the Word ; the Word would so manifest its truth, that there would be a secret acknowledgment that it must have come from God, though there might be no open confession of its origin, and no practical obedience to its dictates.

And this is what, probably, you must have often heard of, as the self-evidencing power of Scripture—the power which there is in the contents of the Bible to act as the credentials of the Bible ; so that if all external witness were swept away, revelation might yet so vindicate its pretensions as to place beyond doubt its being a message from God. And this self-evidencing power of Scripture goes mainly on this fact—that there is such a correspondence between what we read in the Bible and what we find in ourselves, as is not to be accounted for except on the supposition that He who wrote the Book had a superhuman acquaintance with the heart. The manifestation of truth to the conscience results chiefly from what is alleged by St. James—that the Word is as a glass, in which every man may behold himself reflected. We may affirm of the Bible, that he who reads it with attention will find his own portrait given with so much accuracy—his heart so dissected and laid bare for his inspection—that there will be nothing left for him but to confess, that the author of the Bible knew him better than he knew himself—knew him better than he could have been known by any being who could not read the thought and search the spirit. We are accustomed to speak of the great knowledge of human nature which this or that writer displays, and no author establishes for himself so lasting a reputation, or gains so strong a hold upon the public mind, as he who is most successful in letting men see what there is in themselves—in opening to them certain of those chambers of imagery within their own breasts, which had been sealed up or only partially disclosed, till he rose with a kind of magic power, and threw light into the deepest recesses. There is something very curious in this admiration of what is called a knowledge of human nature—in that almost reverence which is felt for a writer by whom such knowledge is specially displayed. It is evident that the writer tells us what we might discover for ourselves ; he tells us what is in ourselves, otherwise it would not be human nature with which he showed great acquaintance. There is nothing foreign in his information ; he brings no intelligence of what is passing in strange countries, or among other orders of being ; he simply sketches the domestic scenery of our own bosom, and informs us of what is going on in the solitude of our own souls. And why, then, should we be so much interested ? Why should we yield a homage to this writer, which we refuse to another who gives us the fruits of laborious travel and research—introducing us to truths with which we should never have had acquaintance, had he not led the way, and won the victory in the great field of discovery ? The fact seems

to be, that the writer who shows great acquaintance with human nature makes his appeal to the conscience and the heart ; they are to be the witnesses of the extent of his knowledge ; and though, indeed, he tell a man nothing which he may not have found out for himself, the truth is, he tells him much which he might not have discovered, seeing that very few attempt the searching into themselves. And the reason of all this is, that the hearer or the reader is informed of mental workings or tendencies, which he had hitherto overlooked, but which he is forced to confess the moment they are pointed out ; and then the feeling is, that the author is gifted with an extraordinary penetration—that he has a power of looking into the heart, which visibly removes him from the great mass of men. He who is deeply versed in human nature is able to discover to a man himself ; and this appears supernatural, inasmuch as the reading of the heart is confessedly in the power of none but the Almighty ; and from this it follows, that the acquaintanceship with human nature may be so accurate and so profound as to persuade us that the writer was actually possessed with supernatural powers. Up to a certain point we give our admiration to a book which presents us with a transcript of what we read in our own hearts, yet we do not feel that the making that transcript proves a more than human penetration or wisdom ; but there may be a point at which the transcript includes so much, or extends to things so remote from observation, that we cannot satisfy ourselves that mere human sagacity could have sufficed for the making it. We may be told of what passes in ourselves, till we are quite sure that our informant must have an acquaintance with human nature which is not ordinarily possessed ; he may describe ourselves in all our individual peculiarities, all the hidden features of which we are not actually aware, and show us the picture till we feel it utterly incredible that the painter has not more than human skill and knowledge. And this is precisely the self-evidencing power which we claim for the Bible. We affirm, that the inspired writers display an acquaintance with the human heart, with all its intricacies and deceits, which is not to be explained on the supposition that they were unaided men, with no more than natural penetration, though perhaps unusual in degree. The point is here passed, in which we can allow the sufficiency of human sagacity ; the acquaintance is too profound, too extensive, too accurate, to be measured by mere native powers ; and our only way of accounting for the marvellous disclosure, which exhibits to us ourselves—every thought being laid bare, every motion of the will, every remonstrance of the conscience, every conflict between duty and inclination—our only way is by referring the document to more than human authorship. And is there any one of you utterly unaware of this power in Scripture to shadow himself ? is there any one of you, who has read so little of the Bible, and read it with so little attention, that he has not found his own case described—described with so surprising an accuracy that he feels as though he himself had sat for the portrait ? When Scripture insists on the radical corruption of the heart, in its native enmity and deceitfulness, is there any one of us who must not allow, that the affirmations in every way hold good—just supposing his own heart to be that of which the affirmations are made ? And when, over and above these more general statements, the Bible descends into particulars—when it speaks of the proneness of men to prefer a transient good to an enduring, the objects of sight, however inconsiderable, to those of faith, however magnificent—when it mentions the subterfuges, the excuses of those whom conscience disquiets—when it shows the vain hopes, the false theories, the lying visions, with which men suffer themselves to be cheated, or rather, with which they cheat themselves,—who is there among us, who will venture to deny that the representation tallies most nicely either with what he is or with what he was—with what he is if he have never repented or sought the forgiveness of sin, with what he was if his nature have been renewed by the operation of God's Spirit ?

And if this be indeed true, then it is very evident that there belongs to the Bible that character which is assigned to it in the words of our text. You have but to look into the Bible, and its pages will show to you yourselves—give you your moral image, just as the glass reflects the natural countenance. You will see portraits drawn, in which you are instantly forced to recognise yourselves, and the effect will be the same as though the leaf were turned into a mirror, and instead of being covered with inscriptions furnished the lineaments of the individual placed before it. Or, to bring the case into exact accordance with that referred to by St. James : the hearer of the Word, just as much as the reader, is in the posture of a man who stands before a mirror. As the preacher brings out of the Bible statement after statement on human corruption—as he depicts the duplicity, the alienation, the treachery, the obduracy of the heart—he is virtually holding up a glass in the midst of an assembly ; and there is not one in the most crowded gathering, who, if he have any candour and will not turn away his gaze, can pretend to deny that they are his own moral lineaments which are to be seen in that glass. And though it may seem somewhat extraordinary, that notwithstanding the professed diversity in human character, we should thus make a single description serve as a portrait of different individuals, you must remember that all men are alike—the difference is only superficial ; so that Solomon could affirm, that “as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man.” The face in the water is not a more accurate copy of the face of the beholder, than the heart of any one man to the heart of any other man. Therefore, with all the differences which there may be amongst you—differences in disposition and temper, partly from nature and partly from education, we still take the scriptural characteristics as equally belonging to every one in the assembly. Holding up these characteristics, we affirm that we hold up the perfect image or likeness of each man or each woman, without a solitary exception ; and we boldly make our appeal to every hearer of the Word, and demand of him whether the preaching do not morally place him in such a condition that he may be likened “unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.”

II. We now turn to the second great truth presented in the passage which is under review ; the truth that we shall be nothing advantaged by this reflecting power of the Word, unless we set ourselves to the acting on its disclosures. St. James, as we before pointed out to you, is speaking of a man who is a hearer only, and not also a doer of the Word. He likens such a man to one, who “having beheld his natural face in a glass, goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.” A person might see himself in a mirror, but if he took only a hasty glance, and did not endeavour to adjust what the mirror showed him of disorder in his dress or appearance, it would be of no service to him that he had the opportunity of beholding his image. He would indeed be more to blame if there were anything unseemly in his aspect which might be altered ; but in every other respect he would remain as he was, and the mirror would have virtually been of no use. And all this it is, which according to the delineation of St. James, we are to suppose paralleled in the case of an individual, who is a hearer of God's Word, but not also a doer. Of course it is not of every mere hearer that he can be considered as speaking. In our own days, whatever may have been the case in those of the apostle, we cannot doubt that there are numbers to whom practically the Word of God does not serve as a mirror at all ; to whom it is a dark unpolished surface, reflecting not the image of the object placed before it. But this is only because these hearers are utterly inattentive, because they give no heed whatsoever to the statements of the preacher, but go through the business of the Sabbath as a matter of form, in which they have no interest. It is no marvel if to such as these the Word of God should not be as a glass. They may be said to close their eyes when the mirror is produced ; and then, though their image is faith-

fully given, it is not of course seen by themselves; and it is not of these hearers that the apostle's simile holds good. They do not forget what manner of men they were; for they have yet to learn this, and this they show themselves determined not to learn.

But there is another class of hearers; whether more or less numerous we pretend not to decide. There are those upon whom a considerable impression is often made by the preaching of the Gospel; and who, while they remain in the sanctuary, and are actually hearkening to the solemn truths of religion, feel an interest in what is stated, a sense of its importance, and a wish to use it for their guidance, which seem full of the best moral promise, and prophetic of such an attempt at amendment of life, as will issue in genuine conversion. We are speaking now of something more than mere mental excitement; of more than that eager and rivetted attention, which may be quite independent of any care for the doctrines delivered, and which might equally be given, whatever the subject-matter of the speaker's discourse. We speak of cases of whose frequency we have a thorough persuasion, cases in which the preached Word serves actually as a mirror; so that as the minister goes on with his description of the depravity and waywardness of the sinner, the effect is the same as though a superhuman voice were whispering to the heart of the hearer, "Thou art the man." Are we to think, that because but too possibly the great mass of the congregation remain unconverted, notwithstanding all the energy and faithfulness with which the Gospel may be published—are we to think that no effect whatsoever is produced on the majority of hearers, beyond what might be equally produced, if the speaker so handled any topic as to work powerfully on the natural feelings of his audience? We do not believe this. We are quite sure that we might take the experience of many amongst yourselves as a witness against this. Are there not many of you who would be ready to own, that sermons have occasionally had on them a mighty and almost overcoming effect; so that they have felt constrained to give their full assent to truths uttered in their hearing, though those truths have convicted them of heinous offences, and proved them placed in terrible danger? When the preacher has set forth, with all the power which God has enabled him to employ, the condemnation under which the world naturally lies—when he has justified that condemnation by enlarging on the Divine attributes, and on the despite which is done to them by sin—and when he has thrown all his earnestness into the solemn appeal, beseeching the unconverted to apply the statements to themselves, and to flee at once from the wrath to which they are exposed—are we to doubt that there have been some, and perhaps many, in the assembly, who have all along owned to themselves, that the preacher had truth on his side, and who have been conscious of a sort of determination that they would act upon his counsels, and forsake the courses against which he uttered his remonstrances? It is only the case described by our Lord, under different imagery, in His parable of the sower of the seed; the case of hearers who receive the word with alacrity, but who, having no root in themselves, endure but for awhile, like the corn that springs up in stony places. It is not that no impression has been made; it is not that the preacher's strength has been wholly thrown away, and that there has been no response to his statements in the breasts of those by whom he has been surrounded; it is rather that the hearers have taken no pains to deepen and make permanent the impressions which the preaching has made; nay, perhaps in many cases, that they have actually taken pains to obliterate those impressions, dreading the sacrifices which they must make if resolved to be religious, and therefore crushing the convictions which would have led them to repentance. It is that they have gone from the church into the world, with the voice of the preacher yet ringing in their ears, and so that voice has been drowned in the whirl of business, or in the sounds of pleasure. There are moments, we are persuaded, in the life-time of the most careless amongst you, and those, too, moments passed in

the house of the living God, at which they who watch for your souls might venture to think that you were not far from the kingdom of heaven. They are moments when the preacher has actually rivetted you by his address; when, as he presses truth after truth upon your attention, the conscience and the heart give a secret but strong testimony to all which he utters; and your only way of escaping from the uneasiness produced by his announcements is by a passing resolve that you will "cease to do evil and learn to do well." We will admit no question as to whether such moments ever come, for we know that preaching is the great engine by which God acts upon man. We know further, that He leaves none of you without the strivings of His Spirit; and therefore have we the best reasons for concluding, that the seasons of which we have spoken—seasons in which the Gospel works with most energy on its hearers, occur to all those who are in the habit of attending public worship. And whenever such moments come, we say again, that we should regard the man on whom the preacher may be said to have laid hold, as not far from the kingdom of heaven. If that man will but act promptly on the feelings which the sermon has excited—if, when he retires from the sanctuary, he will give himself forthwith to prayer, entreating God to enable him to forsake sin, and to pursue the things that belong to his peace—if, in place of contenting himself with an indefinite purpose or promise, he will instantly commence the cutting off the right hand or the plucking out the right eye, we can dare to be confident that he will not be suffered to relapse into indifference, but will be gradually led onwards in practical Christianity, till "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." But the lamentable thing is, that there is ordinarily no attempt to take advantage of the impressions wrought by a sermon. The man who has been all ear to what the preacher had to say, in whose breast every word of the sermon seemed to find an echo, so that there has been no secret attempt at denial or controversy, but rather an unqualified admission of the justice of every allegation; this man, on the breaking up of the sanctuary, will actually make an effort to shake off the gloomy thoughts which have been excited within him, and he will converse with the first neighbour he meets, on some matter of business or politics; and if any reference to the sermon be made, he will notice it just as he would some speech in parliament or some declamation to a jury—a thing in which he had no personal interest, and which was only designed for a temporary end.

And how is it possible, that if you will not strive to carry away with you the moral impressions which may have been made by an earnest exhibition of truth, you should be at all advantaged by your attendance on the ministrations of the Gospel? Again we declare our thorough persuasion, that often when there is presented the portrait of the natural man, as given in the Bible, there are numbers among you who feel forced to recognise themselves; and whenever this takes place, the Word of God serves literally as a mirror. We place a powerful reflector in the midst of you, and his own image is given back to the presumptuous, or the proud, or the worldly minded, or the sensual. If a man thus exhibited to himself, struck with the moral deformity which he has been forced to behold, would strive at once to act on the disclosure, and set about acquiring the renovation of his nature, he would be immeasurably advantaged by the spectacle of his own sinfulness, and the glass of the Word would have been to him the means of transformation into the image of his God. But if he content himself with having been a hearer, and do not immediately and intently strive to make himself a doer of the Word, what is to be looked for, but that he will lose speedily all the features and lineaments at which he stood aghast while perceiving them to be his own? oh! what can come to pass but that St. James should be proved to have described him to the letter, when he likened him to "a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was?"

III. But now turn, lastly, to the third truth presented by the passage which forms our subject of discourse. This is the truth—that by submitting implicitly to what is taught us by God's Word, we shall find that it becomes to us a "perfect law of liberty." The case now supposed by the apostle, is that of a man who does not take a hasty glance and then turn away from the mirror of the Word, but who perseveres in looking, and strives to correct whatever he perceives to be faulty in the moral appearance. There is no change in the metaphor; the man is still represented as looking into a glass; only that glass, in place of being simply styled "the Word," is spoken of under the very expressive title of "the perfect law of liberty." And it is the accuracy of this title, as applied generally to revelation, which we now desire briefly to examine and make good.

We cannot forget that the Bible is in a great measure a system of laws, and that Christianity, more especially, imposes certain restrictions on men, which are satisfied with nothing less than the thorough subjugation of their affections and the thorough consecration of their powers. Our Saviour himself did not hesitate to speak of His religion as a yoke, even whilst promising rest to the weary and heavy laden. He followed up His beautiful invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," by the words, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me;" and then, lest the mention of a yoke should suggest suspicions and fears, He added, "For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." He still allowed that there was a yoke and a burden, even when wishing to present His service in the most attractive point of view. And beyond all question what is required of a true Christian, is submission to laws against which his nature rebels, obedience to precepts which are in direct opposition to his inclinations and his tendencies. If by liberty we were to understand the being suffered to do just what we pleased, then indeed there is no liberty proffered by Christ's Gospel; for this Gospel peremptorily demands that we "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts," that we "keep under the body and bring it into subjection," and that we strive in all things to obey that law which ceased not to be a rule when it ceased to be a covenant. But now examine more narrowly into the nature of freedom, and you will perceive, that we virtually become more free, in exact proportion as we submit more implicitly to the precepts of the Bible. Not without reason do we address God in our Liturgy, as God "whose service is perfect freedom;" for though, through the infirmities of our nature, and the remains of corruption which we shall carry with us to the grave, there will always be a struggle between the flesh and the spirit—and where there is struggle, there can hardly be perfect freedom—still this does not interfere with the correctness of the definition given of God's service; this rather arises from a sort of endeavour to serve two masters. If we literally served only God—if we were never drawn aside to the serving sin, we should be perfectly free; acting not from constraint, but desire; not because we feared the Master, but simply because we loved the Father.

Indeed, it were not difficult to take the statement of our text in its largest sense, and to claim for revelation the character of a "perfect law of liberty." There has been no such nurse of freedom as the Christian religion. The principles which that religion expounds and enforces—the accuracy with which it defines the province and prerogatives of rulers, and the duties of subjects—the rigour with which it denounces every form of injustice, enjoins benevolence, and asserts the brotherhood of man with man—these have caused it to become, though it professes not to interfere with civil institutions, the great extirpator of oppression, the great founder and the great guardian of all that deserves to be called liberty. And this beautiful word "liberty" may be prostituted and abused; it may be bandied about by venal statesmen, or turbulent demagogues; but liberty and Christianity are synonymous terms, as are slavery and irreligion. He who would guide a nation to freedom, must take the Bible

as his statute-book ; and to attack its vices is the direct way to loosen its chains. They little know, who brawl about liberty and show contempt for Christianity, how ignorant they show themselves of the very essence and life of that which they profess to idolise and pursue. God guard us from the liberty which would be enjoined when Christianity was prostrate ! It would be near akin to that liberty of which we read in the book of Jeremiah. "Behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord"—a liberty "to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine." It has been beneath the shadow, and through the silent influence of the Christian religion, that civil liberty has been understood, established and defended ; heathens comparatively know nothing of it, in all their boasted monarchies and republics ; and if a Christian people think to remain free, and yet refuse to bow to the sceptre of Christ, they indulge the idle dream that there shall be nothing like slavery, even when there has been a repeal of "the perfect law of liberty."

But it is rather of an individual, than of a nation, that the apostle speaks in our text. And who, we may well ask, but the true Christian—the doer as well the hearer of the Word—deserves to be accounted free ? Is a man free, just because there are no fetters on his limbs, and he is not the inmate of a prison ? Call you a despot necessarily free, because his will is law, and there is nothing to control him in a single purpose, or a single desire ? Ye know better than this ; ye know that there is often immeasurably more of freedom with the slave than with the tyrant, with the captive than with the goaler. There are fetters of the spirit ; there are mental chains forged of such material, and fastened with such strength, that he who wears them may sit upon a throne, and be unspeakably more a bondsman than many a wretched thing that grinds in a dungeon. An exiled king had learned this truth ; for our James the Second, when on his death-bed in a foreign land, thus addressed his son—"There is no slavery like sin, and no liberty like God's service." And was not the dethroned monarch right ? What think ye of the fetters of bad habits ? What think ye of the chains of indulged lusts ? What think ye of the slavery of sin ? The drunkard, who cannot resist the craving for the wine—know ye a more thorough captive ? The covetous man, who toils night and day for wealth—what is he but a slave ? The sensual man, the ambitious man, the worldly man—those who, in spite of the remonstrances of conscience, cannot break away from their enthrallments,—what are they, if not the subjects of a tyranny than which there is none sterner, and none more degrading ?

But whoso looketh into Scripture and continueth therein, finds himself gradually delivered from all this oppression and all this thralldom. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." If it be not the liberty of him who has no opponent, no tempter, it is the liberty of him who has broken the yoke, and who is ever on the watch that it may never be again fastened round his neck. It is not indeed to our lusts that Christianity proclaims liberty, nor to our natural inclinations and propensities ; against these it proclaims war—a war of extermination—a war in which no quarter is allowed : but on this very account it is that we declare, it brings liberty to man. These lusts, these inclinations, are the taskmasters of man ; through apostacy they were converted from his vassals into his tyrants ; and until grace gain the ascendancy, and give the spirit dominion over the flesh, man is literally in bondage to himself—the lowest of slaves, because he does not hate slavery. And in respect of fears, the bondage is too apparent to admit of debate. The man over whom conscience can stand and chastise with scorpions, who is haunted by the spectres of his sins and the forebodings of punishment—give him wealth, give him power, give him empire, you do not give him freedom. But let the Spirit of God apply these blessed words to his heart, "there is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and he casts off his chains and springs from his dungeon. Glorious liberty ! Who would not long to be the freed man, by thus being the servant of Jehovah ? Once more, I hold up the

mirror in the midst of you. What image is reflected to the sensual and the worldly-minded? "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Then the image is that of a captive, that of a slave; but nevertheless it is your own. Ye hate the very name of slavery, your blood boils at the very mention of slavery, ye feel that a slave and a man are words which should never belong to the same being; and yet, if the glass be true—and true it is, for who but the living God hath fashioned it?—ye are shown to yourselves as slaves. Then act at once upon the showing; resolve in God's strength to be free—and already are the chains falling off.

And, free yourselves, proclaim liberty to others—liberty to the old, liberty to the young—for Christ's blessed Gospel is for all. Christ came to burst the chains which sin had thrown around the human population, and to give freedom to a captive world. And what is such a school as that which now appeals to your bounty, but an engine for freeing numbers, whilst yet in their youth, from the bondage of corruption? Born in slavery, for they were "born in sin," and "children of wrath," the young ones whom this school succours may be taught to behold themselves in the mirror of God's Word—to see their fetters and to struggle for emancipation. Oh! glorious privilege, to be permitted to aid the young in their escape from the prison-house! Never tell me of your love for liberty—never tell me of your abhorrence of slavery, if you can leave the children of the poor, as they must be left if not taught that truth which alone makes men free—if you can leave them fast bound in the dungeon, without an effort to break their spiritual thralldom, and to lead them to the privileges of the freed men of God.

And certainly these are not times in which to relax the Christian education of the poor. We have awakened a general desire for information, we have excited a great thirst for knowledge, and alas! the supply is not equal to the demand—the pure water is not flowing in such abundance that all may drink of it, and not be tempted to seek strange and foul streams. And if we would not have it come to pass, that it should be a great mischief in carrying the education of the poor so far as it has been carried, we must carry it still further. We have raised a spirit which cannot be quieted, but which, by God's help, may be controlled and directed. We believe the strength of a country to lie in the Christianity of its population—not in their developed intelligence, any more than in their accumulated wealth; therefore can we never advocate any process of instruction which would expand the mind, and let alone the heart. Add what you will of science and of literature—bring, if you choose and if you can, philosophy in its several branches into the cottages of our peasants; but oh! instruct them, in the first place, how to save the soul—teach them the fear of God and the love of Christ. It is but making the poor discontented with their station, envious of their superiors, and restless for innovation, to raise them in the intellectual scale without at the same time fixing their hopes on a scene where earthly distinctions are to cease, and the meanest of earth's children may take precedence of the noblest. And it is a thoroughly Christian system—a system of which Christianity is the staple—which is pursued in the schools which now appeal to your bounty. Then support them liberally—give in such a manner, that your liberality may prove your adherence to the good old method of making useful members of society by making thorough Christians, of fitting men for the duties of time by inspiring them with the hopes of eternity. Ay, and give as men who "have respect unto the recompence of the reward." Give as those who give for futurity—for the day of judgment—for the age of immortality. Why should you not? The gifts will not perish. Perish? They are not gifts—they are loans; for hear what the Bible says—"He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will He pay him again."

DAVID IN PRESSING TROUBLE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, TOXTETH, LIVERPOOL,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1849.

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness. Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For Thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for Thou art my strength. Into Thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord. I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: Thou hast set my feet in a large room. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth, because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without, fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in Thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in Thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for Thy mercies' sake. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon Thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. Oh! how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord: for He hath showed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes; nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee. O love the Lord, all ye His saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."—Psalm xxxi.

It is good to read the Scriptures with a secret intent to examine what we have been reading: it creates attention in the reading, and the time so occupied is far from being lost.

Faith and prayer are inseparable in the Christian; real faith, true prayer. Wherever there is real faith, there will most assuredly be true prayer to God; and wherever there is true prayer, there is assuredly already real faith. Distress and trouble quicken the exercises of faith and the cries of real prayer. These truths might be illustrated by the life of any of the Lord's children: they are so, remarkably, in the history and in the psalms of David, and in none more strikingly than in the psalm now before us. David, in distress, cries, believing. Here is faith and trouble and prayer. He cries for deliverance.

The particular trouble under which he laboured at this time appears to have been that remarkable occurrence recorded in the twenty-third chapter of the first book of Samuel, when David was in the city of Keilah, and Saul was about to pursue him there. It was, I say, a remarkable occurrence. I will read to you the passage, commencing at the seventh verse. "And it was told Saul, that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, Thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as Thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech Thee, tell Thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And

the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth." In many respects this occurrence is remarkable. First it affords an instance of an answer to prayer by the ephod. The ephod was fastened, you will remember, to the breastplate of the high-priest, so as never to be separated from it, and in the breastplate was what was called the Urim and Thummim; and this is a passage which confirms the idea that God gave answers to the priest by the shining of the stones in the breastplate which was fastened to, and formed a part of the ephod. This is a remarkable occurrence in another respect; it contains an instance of the avowed foreknowledge of God of events that would come to pass under certain circumstances, but which never did come to pass because those circumstances did not take place. God knew, that if David remained in Keilah, Saul would come there with his men; He knew, that if Saul came and besieged David in Keilah, the men of Keilah would give up David rather than incur the king's displeasure; and He said so in answer to David's prayer. That prayer and the answer to it proceeded on the supposition of David's remaining in Keilah. 'Will Saul come if I remain?' 'He will.' 'Will the men of Keilah give me up?' 'They will.' But then, he did not remain, and so Saul did not come. The passage contains further, in immediate connection with the psalm, an instance of deliverance actually wrought in answer to prayer, a way opened by the answer to prayer whereby the servant of God saw a way of escape.

We shall now consider the particulars of the prayer.

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness." He made use of proper means for his own protection, but he did not trust in them; his trust was in the Lord. His outward conduct was that of a man who is placing reliance on the use of means, but the state of his heart was that of a man who is placing his reliance upon the Lord. This is precisely the condition in which every Christian man should be found; his outward conduct that of a man who is looking to the use of means for success, while his heart is reposing upon God without whom no means can prove successful. He pleads God's "righteousness," that is, His faithfulness, His character, His truth. He has promised not to fail those who call upon Him, and therefore we may plead His righteousness, that is, His veracity, when we cry to Him to deliver us, that we may not be "ashamed." But the case here was urgent: danger was near, and if deliverance were not speedy, all help would be too late. "Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me." It is this combination of circumstances which makes the believer cry in good earnest, where there is not only a need of deliverance, but of speedy deliverance; where circumstances are so complicated that delay is ruin, and, except there be interposition by the good hand of God, the very fact of delay involves additional distress. It is then that men who can pray at all, pray in earnest. In the ease and peace which it is our privilege to enjoy, there is this great snare—there seems to be so much time to have our poor habitual formal prayers answered, that we do not urge them as though there were a necessity for being in earnest. But when circumstances are urgent, prayer becomes earnest indeed.

The language adopted here includes both the foundation and superstructure of the Christian's peace—a "rock" and a "fortress." "Thou art my rock and my fortress." A "rock" conveys the idea of stability, of security for rest, and a "fortress" of defence against attack. The one is the foundation, the other the superstructure, and in applying the words, we have, in the strongest figurative language, this great truth, that God is everything to the Christian both for strength to endure and for protection against assaults and dangers: a "rock" to rest on,—protection against dangers from without; a "fortress"—impregnable. "Therefore for Thy name's sake lead me, and guide me." Here the figure is dropped, and literal or natural language is used; for God is the God of prayer, as well as the strength and protector of all that trust in Him. "Lead me, and guide me." "Shall I stay at Keilah?" He obtained an answer to his question: 'If you do, Saul will come, and the people will give you up.' So "David and his men" "departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go." He was "led" and "guided" out of danger. "Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for Thou art my strength." He knew that Saul plotted privily against him, and this was his cry. There was a net laid privily for him, and he prays to God to pull him out of it, seeing that He was his

"strength" and only He. The next words might suggest to us nothing more than a general expression of devotedness on the part of David, had not a greater than David made use of them in His trouble, when He was at the point of death. The beginning of this verse was uttered on the cross of Calvary before the Lord Jesus "bowed His head and gave up the ghost." "Into Thine hand I commit My spirit." It may be doubted whether David knew that he was writing words suitable and designed for the use of Messiah when He came to die; but it cannot be doubted that the Holy Ghost knew this, and David "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost." A difficulty appears to present itself as to how the concluding part of the verse could possibly be used by the Messiah—how He, who was Himself the Redeemer, could say that He was redeemed: "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." You may be disposed to think that one part of the verse is suitable to Christ, and the other not—I think differently. I believe, my brethren, that the whole Psalm is altogether suitable as the language of Jesus. This is the most difficult expression in it to apply to Him; but the difficulty vanishes when you consider the different senses in which the word "redemption" is used in the Scriptures. It is there employed, not only to signify deliverance from sin—in which sense it has, of course, no application to Jesus—but also to signify deliverance from danger, deliverance from death. Remember that use of it which our Lord makes. When speaking to His disciples concerning the troubles of the last days, He says, "When you see these things, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Not redemption from sin, for that is finished. What redemption is it, then, that "draweth nigh?" Why, the deliverance of Christians from their last enemy. The apostle says concerning the church, that we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;" redemption from the grave, deliverance from the grave. Now in this sense God the Father "redeemed" Messiah, when He raised Him from the dead. Previously to that He was "waiting for the redemption" of His "body." It was cast into the sepulchre, like other dead bodies; but, unlike others, it was to be redeemed before it could "see corruption." In this sense, the latter part of the verse is as suitable to the lips of Christ as the former. "Into Thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me." I imagine a pause there of three days and three nights; and on the morning of the resurrection Christ finished the verse—"Thou hast redeemed Me, O Lord God of truth."

But to return to the circumstances and history of David. He proceeds, "I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord." This he appears to plead as a reason why his prayers should be heard. The words "lying vanities" are generally understood to mean idols, idols of all sorts, and to include particularly all recourse to familiar spirits and wizards, all enchantments, all the star-gazing of the astrologers, everything of that kind whereby lying wonders were wrought and superstitious people deceived; a large region of fiction in the name of religion, which has ever been rife among the ignorant, and continues so to this day—a region in which the great apostasy of Christendom traffics most largely. David hated all these "lying vanities," these superstitious wonders. And it was right that he should plead this hatred, because his enemy Saul did not hate these things. Saul in his distress had recourse to a woman at Endor, who had a familiar spirit and who traded in these "lying vanities." David would do nothing of the kind. By the grace of God he was raised above this region of superstition, and he trusted in Jehovah. My brethren, what a mercy that we should be able to plead in our petitions to Almighty God for deliverance in trouble—"Lord, I have not had recourse to 'lying vanities';" I have not had recourse to saints or angels; I hate the very notion of looking to relics or charms for deliverance in my trouble; I hate "lying vanities" of every kind, and I hope and trust in Jehovah, the living God! Blessed be God that we can use this language. Alas! that so many thousands of our fellow-creatures are unable to do so; for they are taught from the cradle to have recourse to "lying vanities." "I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: Thou hast set my foot in a large room." He triumphs by anticipation in the very midst of his prayer; and I wish you particularly to notice those considerations which console the distressed believer in prayer. They are here mentioned most touchingly; and they especially turn on this, that he is not forgotten of his God, that none of his troubles come by accident, none of them are unnoticed. "Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities." God has considered the troubles of His saints. He knows what they need. The trouble has not come causeless; there is no

caprice in it, no accident. Troubles are not scattered among the saints to fall as they may : each is directed to its point, and all come from Him who has considered the trouble. He is acquainted with the soul in its adversities ; He knows its secret struggles, its secret faults, its secret frailties, its deceitfulness when it would shirk trial and get away without sanctification ; and he shuts up every false exit by which the soul of His dear child might escape with its self-deceit clinging round it, and ties it up and closes it in, so that it cannot get away, as it were, without thorough humiliation. Blessed be God, "Thou hast considered my trouble." He also considers the weaknesses and infirmities of the saint ; He "remembers that he is but dust," that he cannot bear too heavy a pressure ; "God is faithful, who will not suffer any to be tempted above that which they are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape ;" not that you may be able to avoid it altogether, but "that you may be able to bear it." "Thou hast considered my trouble ; Thou hast known my soul in adversities ; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy : Thou hast set my foot in a large room ;" given me deliverance. This may be applied spiritually by the Christian, considering the great enemy of God and man as the enemy referred to. "Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the devil, who would harass and distress and distract me, and hinder me from exercising trust in my God ; who would suggest to me, that because of the sin which I have committed, I need never attempt to come back for peace and quietness to God ; who would suggest despair when he finds conscience at work, as he suggests self-complacency when he finds conscience at ease ; who is just as ready to encourage self-complacency in us when we are not condemning ourselves, as he is to shut us up to despair when conscience is awakened and disturbed with regard to sin." But he is a liar on both sides. We should be on our guard. We should cry to God to deliver us from self-complacency in our best efforts, and from despair in our worst ; to give us humility and joy and satisfaction when we have the testimony of conscience that we are serving God, and to give us confidence in the Lord in the hour of repentance for sin, and so to bring us into a "large room," and into Jesus Christ.

"Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble." Now here the prayer is continued. The point which we have now reached may be the prayer of David after his escape from Keilah, but when he and his men, though freed from one danger, were still exposed to others, and David in particular was in great trouble. Now just consider the circumstances in which David was placed before we continue the exposition of the Psalm. Saul had, as it were, outlawed him, and there was a price set upon his head. It was an offence against the state for any man to receive him into his house. Abimelech the priest, who had received him kindly, had, though ignorant of the state of things at court, been killed for so doing. Saul ordered Doeg to kill him because of his kindness to David, and this order had been executed. This having become known, even David's "neighbours" and "acquaintances" dreaded him, and turned away from him ; he was to them as "a dead man out of mind ;" or "like a broken vessel"—a despised thing. Here was a painful position for him to be in. Under these circumstances he complains of his distress, and he complains of his "iniquity ;" and when he mentions his "iniquity," it is not as touching Saul, for so far as Saul was concerned David was faultless, but his confession refers to his sin against God. "For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing : my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed." I would just observe here, that temporal distress of any kind has a natural tendency to cause the Christian to remember his sins afresh. There remains even in the truest believer a tendency to ascribe his temporal sufferings to his sins, and to regard them as a punishment for those sins ; and this adds to his distress. In one way, however, it works well—it gives poignancy to repentance. And, really, my dear friends, the repentance of those who are in easy, comfortable and happy circumstances—having good health, flourishing finances, happy homes, comfortable and kind friends, esteem among their neighbours, high respect, everything in short which is considered desirable in worldly things, the repentance of such is generally very superficial. Oh ! it is a proof of great grace when a person so situated is really concerned on account of sin. And temporal distress has, I repeat, a natural tendency to produce such concern ; and it is so used by God in His good providence in relation to His own children. When they would become worldly without it, He breaks up the nest, He stirs them up from their slothfulness of spirit, and gives an edge to repentance by some sword in their circumstances. Then they feel as though their "bones" were "consumed." But he proceeds with

reference to what I have just been saying—"I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without, fled from me." They were afraid to be seen showing any kindness to him. "I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel." Then there is another feature in the thirteenth verse—"I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life." To justify their attempts at evil-treating him, they circulated evil reports of him. Then he heard slander on every side. This has always been the way of the world in their enmity against God's children. Wishing to do them a spite, they try to justify themselves by first creating an evil report against them. Slander precedes this species of persecution and has done so at all periods. And so it is now. Indeed this is now *the* persecution itself; for those who are unable to carry matters any further, who are obliged by the merciful position of external things to confine themselves to words, take a malicious pleasure in propagating what they know to be slander against the children of God. Oh! then, if any of you are slandered for righteousness' sake, do not suppose that any "strange thing has happened unto you." It is no new feature; it is a mark of the King's old highway, and the saints have been thus tried since the beginning of the world. "But I trusted in Thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God." Here is patience also: let there be on your part a patient trusting in the Lord your God. "My times are in Thy hand." "My times," the varieties of treatment that I am to meet with, and the varieties of periods during which that treatment is to last, all are in Thy hand. Trying times, bad times, adverse times, times of trouble, times of distress, all these are in God's hand. Here is the believer's recognition of God's management of him. "My times are in Thy hand." Is it a time of trouble, a time of darkness? Am I shut up, so that I know not a way of escape? It is Thy hand has done it. "Thou hast considered my trouble;" "My times are in Thy hand."

"Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant: save me for Thy mercies' sake." These words in such a connection readily explain themselves. It is more the heart which is required to be at work here than the head. You do not require exposition to enable you to understand this, you require experience to enable you to enter into it. The shining of God's face upon a distracted saint, causing him to have spiritual light in the midst of providential darkness, and tranquillity when on his knees, though the tempestuous ocean is heard raging around, this is a marvel to himself. In the light of God's countenance he has the serenity of an assured salvation whilst every thing without is terrible. "Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon Thee." This is his plea. The Lord hath promised that those who call upon Him shall not be ashamed, and this promise we are to plead. "Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous." Now you have often heard that these expressions in the imperative mood in the Psalms may as truly be in the indicative mood and future tense; that is, may be prophecies; and no doubt this is true. Our most accomplished Hebrew scholars have shown that all these expressions may, without doing any violence to the original language, be read in the future tense, as prophecies. "The wicked shall be ashamed;" "the lying lips shall be put to silence, which speak grievous things." It is a great truth, that the Lord shall execute judgment for all the ungodly speeches which ungodly men have uttered against Him, according to the prophecy of Enoch mentioned by Jude—and many other prophecies might be mentioned of similar import—that when He shall come, all His enemies shall be put to silence, and judgment shall be executed for ungodly words. Much is said in Scripture upon this subject; and the great judgment which falls upon the little horn, falls upon it because of the proud words which the horn had spoken against the Most High. But supposing the words to stand as they do, in the form of prayer, and not of prophecy, they are in perfect harmony with the true spirit of Christian indignation against sin. They accord entirely with our Lord's language in the twenty-third of Matthew, where He pronounces "woe, woe, woe,"—a third time woe—upon the transgressor of God's law; they accord entirely too with St. Paul's language about Alexander the coppersmith; they accord with the high indignation against sin which forms a part of real Christian faith: not indignation against those who sin against us personally. For our own enemies and persecutors we are commanded to pray; but there is a sin unto death, which is opposition to God—"I say not," says the apostle,

"that you shall pray for it." It is a righteous thing to desire the accomplishment of God's purpose, and if it be His revealed purpose to put all lying lips to silence, it is a righteous thing for us to say, "Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous." What is it to pray "Hasten the time when they shall be put to silence, and judgment shall be executed," but to enlarge the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus?" You cannot utter this latter prayer with scriptural intelligence without including the other. There is not, therefore, any cause for that apprehension which many feel on reading what are called the imprecations of the psalmist. Imprecations is a hard word; we would rather say, these prayers for the execution of God's judgments. They are nothing more, as you will see when you come to examine them with care, than an enlargement of the words which we do not hesitate to use, however little we may feel them, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." When the Lord of all comes, they who have been slanderers of the saints shall indeed be silenced for ever.

The concluding part of the Psalm from the nineteenth verse embraces three subjects which I can do little more now than enumerate. The first is an admiring expression or acknowledgment of God's goodness to all His saints; the second is a personal appropriation of that by David himself; and the third is an exhortation to the saints to "love the Lord" and to "be of good courage."

There is, first, an admiring acknowledgment of God's goodness. This occupies the nineteenth and twentieth verses:—"Oh! how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Here is an apostrophe of admiring faith. David admires the goodness of God in keeping His saints "secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues," keeping them in quiet so that they do not regard slanders, keeping them, as it were, in a strong castle, in the Lord's royal pavilion. This admiration has reference not so much to the goodness which shall be shown to the saints hereafter, as to that which is manifested towards them here. Even now, in the midst of their persecutions, in the midst of slander and of "the strife of tongues" to which they are exposed,—they are kept at peace. There is a "peace which passeth understanding" which the Lord gives to His saints. Not as the world gives, gives He unto them. He gives them something which they cannot themselves understand; it is beyond their own understanding as well as that of others. As I said just now, it is a wonder to themselves how they can be quiet. When the saint is abused, slandered, maligned with every imaginable falsehood, he can go and lie down, and go to sleep as quietly as if not a word had been said against him. This is indeed a marvel. Yet the sensitiveness of men to false reports is one of the things which at this very moment, and in this very country, keeps many men from filling the place which they would fill in order to do all that is good in public life. They are frightened by "the strife of tongues;" they are terrified by the thought of the evil reports which will be circulated against them if they take a prominent part in public; they do not dare withstand the calumnious press which prints its slanders; and thus many good men, although God has promised that He will "keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues," actually hide in the privacy of their own individual life, as if they had none of the duties of religion devolving upon them, as if they owed nothing to their country, and as if patriotism were dead within them. It is not that they have no patriotism; patriotism they have, and they would perhaps be glad to see others do what they ought to do, if not to follow in the wake of others; but they cannot bear the brunt of the lying press, they cannot bear the slanders which may be brought to bear against them. Oh! unworthy apprehension! Christian men should never be ashamed if they put their trust in God; He will "keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." But there are persons of whose sincerity as Christians we may not doubt, who have a very sensitive, tender, delicate, and fragile composition of nerves, and are afraid of exposure to "the strife of tongues;" it would injure their health, it would so agitate them at night that they could not sleep. I have no doubt that this is the case with some. Yet I cannot but think there is a want of faith here, for God could compose the nervous system of the most delicate, and give His beloved sleep, and keep him still even amid "the strife of tongues."

Then there is the appropriation of this to David's own case in the twenty-first and twenty-second verses:—"Blessed be the Lord: for He hath showed

me His marvellous kindness in a strong city." This very kindness had been generally expressed in the preceding verses; he now thanks God for showing it to him when he had not deserved it:—"For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes: nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee." There was faith enough to make him cry for help, though there was misgiving and unbelief enough to make him afraid. As in a previous case, familiar to you all, he had "said in his haste, All men are liars," so here he "said in his haste, I am cut off." But in the midst of that haste he still prayed to God, and God heard his prayer. His faith prevailed, though there was fear mixed with it. "Thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto Thee."

Then he sums up with an exhortation to the saints. "Oh! love the Lord." He has shown good cause for you to love Him, whether you consider His dealings with you in trouble, His deliverance of you out of trouble, or His preservation of you amid the strife and tumult of the world. "Oh! love the Lord, all ye His saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful." He watches over them continually for good, and in time of distress He is with them and they are preserved. He keeps their steps; He "preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer," according to his works. He can humble the proud and the evil doer against His church; and He does so; not always at the moment that the believer desires or expects it, but always surely. In His own time He "plentifully rewardeth the proud doer." No one hath hardened himself against God and prospered; no one hath persevered in enmity against God's church and prospered; no one hath practised iniquity against one of God's saints and prospered. The Lord will "plentifully reward" those proud doers, those liars and slanderers of His people, who speak against them falsely for righteousness' sake. You may rest assured that they will always receive according to their works.

And their exhortation is, "Be of good courage." Be bold in the Lord. Do not be afraid of man. Who art thou, that thou shouldst fear a man that shall die, when you have God for your defence? "Be of good courage." Soldiers you are, and soldiers should be courageous people. You are called to be "goodsoldiers of Jesus Christ," to show your colours, and stand to them with courage, and not to fear the result. God's enemies are your enemies, and it requires courage to face them. Nature is fearful—fearful of excess in these matters. Strange perversion! that men who are not afraid of excess in worldly matters should be so much afraid of excess in religion. You often see a species of timidity among Christians. Real Christians are often timid about zeal in the service of God, when they have no timidity about daily zeal in their own business: they are not afraid of that. Now why is there this difference? The reason is simply this—that public opinion justifies their zeal in business, whereas by being zealous for God they run counter to public opinion, and that creates a commotion. When everything goes with the tide, the water may continue smooth; but if there be something which stems and meets it, comes athwart it, and will not yield to it, then there is commotion and broken water. Do you think a real Christian can go through the world without breaking water? Do you think he can keep smooth in the face of the abomination which is going to hell—for the tide of the world is going there? Wide is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many are walking within it, while few in comparison are going towards heaven; here is cause for broken water. But the Lord will keep His children quiet in the midst of the breakers, in the midst of the foam occasioned by the stemming of the evil current. "Be of good courage," then; stand to your posts; acquit yourselves like men. Let each of you in your own place, in your own calling "be of good courage;" and "He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." "We are saved by hope; but that which is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? but if we hope for that which we see not, then with patience do we wait for it."

GOD'S WORD RIGHTLY RECEIVED.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. & REV. HENRY MONTAGU VILLIERS, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1849.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually also worketh in you that believe."—1 Thess. ii. 13.

THE means which God has condescended to use for the conversion of sinners have been the same in all generations. St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, explains the nature of those means in very few words. He says, that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Many other passages I might quote, to show you that God "magnifies His Word above all His name;" but I will not occupy the time to-night by these general prefatory remarks, but at once call your attention—first, to the manner in which the Thessalonians received the Word of God; secondly, to the evidences of their right reception of it; and thirdly, to the apostle's thankfulness upon the subject.

I. First, the manner in which the Thessalonians received the Word.

You perceive, in the text, that the apostle says they received it "not as the word of man, but as the Word of God." It is clear therefore that they received it not as being a matter of doubtful importance. Unconverted men will not allow—I do not say they will not believe, because they never take the trouble of examining so as to know whether they ought to believe or not—but they will not allow that any honest man may come to a clear and satisfactory assurance that he is in the right road to heaven. If the whole world stood against the converted man, he would not care—the man that is "mighty in the Scriptures" cannot be shaken; but the unconverted man rides off upon what he sees, not upon what he reads. He says, for instance—"I look at the Christian world, as you call it, and I find that there are Church of England men, and Roman Catholics, and Baptists, and Independents, and Wesleyans, and a variety of other sects; and therefore who is right?" In the first place, such a man takes no trouble to distinguish whether men are agreed upon essentials, and whether it is only upon non-essentials that they disagree. But he comes to a conclusion which has no connection with his premises—that no man can be certain of being right; and thus he tries to satisfy himself with an excuse for living and dying uncertain whither he is going, or of his right condition in the sight of God. For instance, Scripture points out to us that we are "justified freely by grace, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," and sanctified in body, soul, and spirit, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; the unconverted man says that he hopes he shall be saved, though he does not recognise Christ as his only hope—and he trusts he shall share the blessings of everlasting happiness, though he pretends not to be a saint and seeks not daily and earnestly the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. This is receiving the

doctrines of justification and sanctification "as the word of man." The man looks upon the broad statements of the Word of God as matter of mere conjecture. In short, his state seems to be that which is described in the eighth chapter of Hosea, at the twelfth verse, where the Lord says—"I have written unto him the great things of My law, but they were counted as a strange thing." There are large bodies of hearers who count the Gospel "a strange thing." They say—"Preach to us morality, tell us of honesty, tell us of sobriety, explain to us the sacraments ;" but when we preach the Gospel to them, and tell them that they are lost sinners, and without it they will perish everlastingly, for it is only "hid to them that are lost," they "count it as a strange thing"—they receive it "as the word of man."

Then again : there are others who receive it with what the Scripture calls "itching ears." That is, they hear the Word read or preached, as if their only object was to learn something new ; but the Gospel is no "good news" to them. They want something to satisfy their intellects, more than something which shall touch their hearts—which shall excite their imagination, instead of humble their pride. These receive the Gospel "as the word of man," and are accurately described in the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel, at the thirty-first verse. "They come unto thee"—that is, to the prophet, or the preacher—"they come unto thee as the people cometh,"—that looks well ; "and they sit before thee as thy people :"—who can distinguish them from the real children of God ?—"and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that playeth well upon an instrument : for they hear thy words, but they do them not." This is a description of those who run after preachers, instead of seeking the Gospel—who care more for a particular man than for a particular truth : in short whatever is preached, provided they like the sound they are contented, and receive the message merely "as the word of man." They conceive that ministers preach from their own imagination ; and thus, when solemn warnings are given, they produce no effect. I believe that such persons are depicted by the men that lived at the time of the flood. Noah "preached righteousness ;" for twenty years he warned them ; they assisted in building the ark ; the ark was built ; the rain came ;—but they would not believe him. So is it with persons who are warned of their standing on the brink of hell, and being subject to the wrath of God, yet will not "flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel."

Now the apostle says that this is what the Thessalonians did not do. They did not receive the Gospel "as the word of man, but as the Word of God." That is, they received it with a holy reverence, as being spoken by the authority of God. When they came to the house of God, and heard the preaching of His Word, they remembered the exhortation of the wise man—"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools : for they consider not that they do evil." They did not come, therefore, in a light and frivolous state of mind, but they felt that they were in "none other than the house of God." My brethren, there are many in this church to-night, who never thought of leaving their homes without praying that a message from God might be delivered, to save souls ; and I have no doubt that the prayer will be answered, for God is here, we are gathered together in His name, and those who "receive the Word as the Word of God," do not come here for entertainment, but in a deep and solemn state of mind, desiring to remember—"This may be the last message delivered to me, and on it may depend not only my peace and comfort on a dying-bed, but my rejoicing in the day of judgment."

The Thessalonians also received the Word as infallible truth. That is to

say, they felt, they knew, they acknowledged, that there was no mixture of error in that Word. Let us remember, "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" therefore their word came from the Spirit of truth. And to what does faithful preaching testify? To Him who is the Truth, in whom all truth is concentrated—Jesus, who said, "I am the Truth." So that they felt that they were receiving what could admit of no mistake.

Yea, more, they received it as perfect truth. There are a few little words in the fifth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy which seem to bear upon this point. In the twenty-second verse you read—"And he added no more." And this is the doctrine of the Church of England, that Scripture is perfect, requires no addition—that from it nothing must be withdrawn, because it "contains all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein or may be proved thereby is not to be required to be believed, of any man." What a blessing, then, my dear brethren, that you belong to a church where the Bible is read in every service, and to a Protestant country where every one who can read may for tenpence possess the perfect guide to everlasting life! Depend upon it, my brethren, if any one tempts you away from the plain Word of God, he is tempting you to hell, and the Lord may say to you, as He did to the scribes of old—"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures."

II. Secondly, I would point out the evidences of this right reception on the part of the Thessalonians.

The apostle says—"Ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh." He saw, therefore, the practical effects of the Word, many of which are set forth in Scripture; but time will only allow of my glancing at one or two of them.

In the first place, it has a quickening power. In the hundred-and-fiftieth verse of the hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, the psalmist says—"This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy Word hath quickened me." What was his comfort? It was the Word. "Remember Thy Word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope." How is it that the Word has this quickening effect? It is because it reveals Christ, shows us the wonderful things which He has done for us, which He is now doing for us, and which He is ever ready to do for us, and causes us to say, "The love of Christ constraineth us" to "live not unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us and rose again." It gives us a new life; as we are told, that we are "begotten again by the Word of God."

It has also an enlightening power. It shows us that "the commandments of God are exceeding broad;" and also, enables us to judge of things which differ. It is true that there is an innate knowledge in us all, to a certain degree, by which our conscience tells us what is right and what is wrong; but the conscience needs enlightening—it may be dark. Paul's conscience was in the dark, when he conscientiously thought that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus;" but it afterwards became enlightened, and he found that he was "dead" in the sight of God. Look also at the hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, where the psalmist says—"The entrance of Thy Word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

Once more: it gives comfort; unfolding the exceeding rich promises of God's Word. If you look at the ninth and tenth verses of the first chapter of the epistle from which our text is taken, you will see the consequences of the study of the Word on the part of the Thessalonians: "They themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son

from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." They waited for the coming of the Lord Jesus, when they should become partakers of that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." So that it not only unfolded to them the means of escape from the wrath to come, but opened up to them the grounds of present comfort, with the assurance of a blessed hope, and so inducing them to labour diligently, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," knowing that "He is faithful," and that He is "the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

III. Let us now observe the thankfulness of the apostle. Why should he be thus thankful? Why should he not be contented with thanking God, but "thank Him without ceasing?"

The apostle knew that every good gift must come from God, and that the effects must therefore be ascribed to Divine grace. He takes care to insist upon this truth all through his writings. If you look at the sixth verse of the fourth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, you will find that he thus speaks of the entrance of that Word which is light: "God which commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He knew that the Word could only continue and bring forth fruit by Divine grace; for the husbandman went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the way-side, and some among thorns, and some upon the rock, but it was only that which fell upon the "good ground" that "brought forth fruit unto perfection." I do not deny that the apostle had a selfish feeling; but I think, we may call it godly selfishness, for he saw that this would tend to his own happiness in the world to come. He winds up the chapter from which the text is taken—"What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." And again—"Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." Thus, then, he could be thankful to God, for allowing him to be the honoured instrument in setting that Word before them, and for having so prepared the soil in which he was to labour, that they might receive his message not as the message of men, but as that message which should make them "wise unto salvation." But doubtless, he saw also, that while this would tend to his own rejoicing, it would increase the glory of God; for if it was a great thing to call the world out of nothing, sure I am that there is no converted man, who knows the depth of sin from which he has been rescued, the great price at which his salvation has been bought, that would for one moment deny that in his case a much greater work was accomplished. Here, then, there was glory brought to God by their thus receiving the Word; "wisdom was justified of her children;" Christ "saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied."

Now, brethren, though one might be encouraged to dilate still more upon the actual wording of this text, the time tells me that I had better try to fasten these truths, as God shall enable me, upon your hearts and consciences. You have heard to-night from the mouth of a fellow-sinner, the Word of God; in what spirit have you heard it? Have you been able to say—"My hope is in Christ; other foundation I would not lay, other foundation I dare not build upon, but Christ is my all in all?" Can you say, as in the sight of God, that you desire to fashion your life according to His Word? If I were to exhort you to do anything, you might be at liberty to reject my advice; but it is the Word of God that I wish you to obey. Will you prayerfully, diligently, honestly search the Word, that you may act accordingly? If you have received the Word properly, it will work. "Ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh

also in them that believe." It does not, therefore, depend upon the message—it depends upon *you*. We are told in other Scriptures, that the Word preached did not profit the hearers, "not being mixed with faith." If you receive it in this manner, you cannot be surprised at its not doing you good; but if you receive it "as the Word of God," then indeed you will be blessed. Oh! how you will wish some day that you received the message as from God to your soul! Methinks, when you are past enjoying the pleasures of life—when you have learned, standing on the edge of the grave, to weigh the follies and vanities, the riches and honours of the world in the balances of the sanctuary—you will say, 'I wish that when my mind was stronger, my body healthier, my opportunities greater, I had listened to that Word.' My dear brethren, I beseech you to listen to that warning message to-night, and to "flee from the wrath to come." And if you are undecided, if you feel that what I am saying is of importance, and yet your heart is (as it were) pulling you other ways, be decided for God this night, and "lay hold of the hope which is set before you in the Gospel." Do not be puzzling yourselves with the more difficult and abstruse questions, but lay hold on the plain and certain promise—"Him that cometh unto Me I will in no-wise cast out." And come to Him not only for salvation—come to Him for strength, come to Him for grace to help you, come to Him for support in your daily walk, and you shall never be sent empty away. But it is an awful thing, to see a poor sinner hardened against the truth. I feel inclined to ask him one question—"How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?"

But, dear brethren, the text is also full of comfort. No one of us is the same at all hours. We cannot continue the same under all circumstances of our natural body; and there will be a fluctuation in our spiritual feelings, as there is in our bodily health. Therefore there are many who are inclined to despond, because their frames and feelings fluctuate. Now we should be counted mad, if we expected the natural sun to shine alike every day; and it is no less foolish to despond, if we do not see with the same clearness the Sun of righteousness shining every day. But your comfort ought not to depend upon this; your assurance of everlasting life does not depend upon your feelings. The believer looks upon the promise—"He that believeth hath everlasting life." He may be mistaken about what this preacher says, or what that writer says; but he cannot be mistaken in the Word of God. It is not "the word of men"—it is perfect, it is clear, it is conclusive; there is no mixture of error—it comes with the authority of God himself. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." See, then, our defence; we are immovable. The infidel, or the scoffer, or the worldly man, may come to us and say—"Reconcile the sovereignty of God with the freewill of man;" the believer's answer is—"My salvation does not depend upon the reconciling of anything, except my own soul being reconciled to an offended God; I find that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin"—that is my reconciliation; and therefore I put aside all these questions, and come to the foundation: I am immovable; God has placed me upon the Rock of ages; He has "established my goings," I cannot be shaken.'

Now, my dear brethren, you want that certainty in your mind. If you want to know your own state, study the Bible; and if you want peace upon a dying-bed, be mighty in the Scriptures. Make sure of the Word of God, and that will comfort your soul with a peace and a comfort which the world can never give nor take away, and which will only be increased as knowledge itself shall be increased, when you shall see your blessed Saviour, to whom that Bible has testified, face to face, and know Him "even as you are known."

OUR MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

PREACHED IN THE SCOTCH CHURCH, REGENT SQUARE,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1849.

“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.”—Hebrews ii. 17.

THE blessed Redeemer, in whose name we meet and on whose goodness our hopes reside, is that Eternal Word which “was in the beginning with God, and was God,” “the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His being,” the visible representation of Divine glory on this earth when He came down to it; and is as much more exalted than the highest created beings as the son is above the servant—as he who is of the same nature with the Father is above those whom He created to serve Him. And therefore to Him has the apostle applied these words of the psalmist—“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom;” and those other words of the psalmist, in which the incommunicable glory of God is described, are no less applied to Him by this inspired Author—“Thou, Jehovah, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.” When this glorious Being beheld us in our ruined state, and determined according to the will of the Father to rescue His own people from everlasting sorrow, it was needful for us that He who came to suffer in our stead should be of our nature, and He therefore did not shrink from bearing that fallen nature which He was to redeem, and, though without sin, submitted to all those sinless infirmities into which we on this earth had fallen.

It is a comfort to those who have learnt to trust in Christ, to think how completely He resembled us; because by that we perceive how He could be a substitute for us, in bearing the punishment due to our sins, and could secure to us as just as well as a merciful forgiveness. But there was another end to be answered in this conformity of the Saviour to the saved. It is stated in our text. “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.”

Our Lord was pleased to accomplish that merciful commission of the Father, who “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish;” and He came down to bear all our infirmities, that He might manifest to us, and enable us to feel to our inmost souls, that He can sympathise with us in all our necessities. He came, as the text tells us, “that He might be a High Priest to us.” In other words, that He might atone for our sins, as the Jewish high-priest offered the typical and ceremonial atonement, and that then He should intercede in our behalf; as the Jewish high priest once a year went into the most holy place, with the blood

of the sacrifice ; that He might plead His blood before the mercy-seat. The Lord Jesus, then, has completed in behalf of all who trust in Him, this perfect atonement, and is now accomplishing for them this no less merciful intercession ; and because He has thus suffered, He is “ able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Our text assures us, that He bore the infirmities of our nature, and was a man among men, in order that He might be “ a *faithful* high priest :” that when He came upon this earth, He might not in our infirm condition shrink from accomplishing this great task, in behalf of those whom He loved, and whose nature He had adopted for His own. He accomplished His great commission, and made the required atonement, without for one moment shrinking from the sorrows which it entailed. But He is still “ the High Priest of our profession,” accomplishing the other part of His mission, which is to intercede in behalf of His people ; and by His bearing the infirmities of our nature and being a man among men, we can understand Him to be “ a faithful High Priest” still—never weary of His merciful office, never forgetting it, never abandoning it, never overlooking the wants and necessities of any of those whom He has loved, and for whom He intercedes. He is thus “ a faithful High Priest ;” having proved Himself to be so to us, by assuming our nature in our behalf.

But again : our text assures us, that He took this nature in order that He might be “ a *merciful* High Priest ;” and interesting as all the other particulars are, each of them worthy of a distinct and careful examination, and each repaying a diligent and frequent meditation, it is to this one attribute of our blessed Redeemer, as our High Priest, that I desire this day to direct your attention for a little while. The apostle has here told us, that the Lord Jesus Christ has become a suffering man like ourselves, in order that He might be “ a merciful High Priest :” that He might in our nature exercise that mercy, and make it manifest to us that we might trust Him. Pleasant is it to contemplate that mercy—for He is our living, our all-sufficient, our only Saviour, present with us this day. He is more to us than all the world beside. If He bless us, we are happy for ever ; if He honour us, we are dignified for ever ; eternal life and glory follow His approbation. How pleasant it is for us to think that He is “ a merciful High Priest !” He is merciful to sinners, and still more merciful, therefore, to those whom He has saved.

To appreciate in some little degree the mercy which there is in the heart of Jesus Christ towards sinners, let us recal some of the manifestations of that mercy, which (we are told) are the pledges of what He feels for us now. In our text it is declared, that He assumed our nature and “ was made in all things like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful High Priest.” Since, then, His office was not to be wholly accomplished on earth, but to be completed in heaven, to the conclusion of all things, the apostle has here taught us that His assuming our nature was to show to us His present mercy perpetually, and not merely the mercy which He showed on earth ; it was to assure us of what He is now, as well as to demonstrate what He was then ; it was to encourage all the generations of His people in succession to trust His mercy, as well as to remind them of the beautiful life which that mercy caused Him to lead on earth. Every manifestation, then, of mercy towards sinners, which our Lord showed in His ministry on earth, or by means of His apostles after His death, was intended to reveal to us what our Saviour now is, and to make you and me to trust in that same mercy which He then manifested. And this the apostle encourages us to feel, when he says that Jesus Christ is “ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” and on that account urges all

who believe on Him to follow those who have set high examples, and after a life of faith have died in peace ; so that we may be sure, the feelings which He exhibited on earth are those which He retains in glory, now that He has carried our human nature up to the throne of the Most High, and as God's viceroy sits on the throne of the universe.

He is merciful, then, my brethren, to sinners of every kind and of every degree. He has mercy for all in this assembly who are yet unforgiven, unsaved, unsaved. No matter how great the offences of any in this congregation may be, or how varied their complexion, Jesus Christ is "a merciful High Priest" towards such. He is merciful to those who may have been the most abandoned in their lives. There is no departure from moral rectitude or from purity of conduct, which He has not mercy enough to forgive. For we are told of a penitent transgressor who had led such an abandoned life, standing at His feet weeping, and pouring the box of fragrant ointment on them, and shedding tears, fast and frequent, from the force of feelings which she could not controul. Those tears were tokens of contrition for sin—not arising from a dread of punishment, but from a sense of pardon. She had heard our Lord's words : His mercy had reached her heart, had conquered her evil nature, had made her a thankful and humble believer ; and because she had much forgiveness, she could not fail to love much. And therefore, when thus she wept over the feet of Jesus, it was a token (as He himself explained it) that she had already received a frank and full forgiveness of all the sins which she had committed. For all such He has the same free mercy, and He is ready to heal each bleeding heart that has felt the burden of sin and dreaded everlasting condemnation.

If there are any in this congregation who have been hindered from receiving Christ and receiving truth, by the debasing influence of the love of worldly gain, by covetousness and an eagerness which has transgressed the principles of rectitude, and from which such have not been able to turn their hearts to the stricter law, as well as the more humbling doctrines of the Gospel, Jesus Christ has mercy for such ; for it was one such, notorious for his oppression and his injustice—a man whom his neighbours pointed out as peculiarly a sinner—that He selected for His guest, that He might bring at once the comfort of His presence and the blessing of salvation to his heart and to his house. As Zaccheus was, some may possibly be in this house of prayer to-day. And if there be one such, the Lord Jesus Christ has the same mercy for him as that which He displayed to Zaccheus, and is as ready freely to forgive and renew such an impenitent transgressor.

If there are any in this congregation, who have done violence to conscience—if there are any who have felt the most tempted to despair of mercy—even such can find more than a parallel to their case in some of those to whom Christ has shown forgiveness. There was one poor sinner, whose offences were unlike, probably, any of this congregation, even the most ungodly ; there was one who had not only trampled on the laws of God, but who had likewise violated the laws of man, and who for his offences was justly condemned to public shame and an excruciating death. And yet that wretched sinner, who crowned his other offences by blaspheming the Lord of glory, when he saw Him hanging by his side on the tree, subdued by the power of truth when it was carried to his heart by the Holy Spirit, became a repentant believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, and recognizing His mission as the Saviour and His power therefore to save, said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom ;" and the Lord Jesus Christ did not for one instant delay the mercy he sought, but even as he hung there, with the agonies of death approaching, said, "Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

There was an eternal heaven awaiting that man, whose life had exposed him to public infamy and to premature destruction.

If there are any here—there are not, I feel convinced—whose lives have been so opposed to godliness that they have taken pleasure in persecuting the people of Christ; if there are any who have shown dislike, and hatred even, to those whom Christ has loved, for no other offence than because they loved Him—for them also He has mercy; because it was such a sinner as this, whose offences, I doubt not, were beyond those of any individual in this congregation,—it was one whose nature apparently was coarse and brutal as his office was demoralising—who, when he had shown marked and unnecessary cruelty to the saints and servants of Jesus Christ, and instead of offering food for their hunger, or alleviating the pain of their wounds, when he had reason to know they were innocent, only thrust their feet in the stocks, and enclosed them in the most revolting part of the prison committed to his trust; it was to that man, when, affrighted by a sense of his sins and fearful of sudden destruction, he exclaimed, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” that the Saviour of sinners commissioned His apostle, as the messenger of His mercy, to say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Nothing else was required of him whose offences had been so aggravated, and whose case appeared so hopeless.

And yet there was one whose transgressions seemed the most entirely hopeless, whose crimes had been the most aggravated—who was not ignorant of Scripture, but who after the examination of it, was not merely misled by many furious passions, but by the more measured ferocity to which false and bigotted notions had led him—one who with all his wickedness was exulting in his own righteousness—one whose character, therefore, seemed the furthest from mercy, as his conduct had been the most full of guilt; it was for him that the Lord Jesus selected His choicest blessings—it was for him, (this great offender against His people and against Him), that Christ reserved a peculiar manifestation of His mercy, and that for the express purpose that He might show you and me how merciful He can be to sinners. And fancy not, my brethren, that these cases were (as I have sometimes heard it stated) exceptions to the rule. No, they were indications of what the Lord Jesus Christ is ever ready to do for sinners, when, by any means humbled and alarmed, they bow before Him and ask an interest in His mercy. The apostle Paul has told us to derive this consolation and instruction from his own example, when he says—“For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him to life everlasting.” The patience, which heard his blasphemies, and did not blast him with vengeance—the patience, which saw his hatred, and did not sentence him to reprobation—the patience which just selected that moment when his exasperation and his rage were at their highest point, in order to manifest the superiority both of His goodness and of His power; that patience was “a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him to life everlasting.”

This is sufficient to prove that the Lord Jesus has the same mercy for every sinner in this house of prayer to-day which he had for Paul. It is no flattery when I say, that I believe no one in this building has sinned as Paul sinned. He called himself “the chief of sinners;” he believed himself to be so; and his sins certainly were of a kind so aggravated that few have ever been led by circumstances to equal them. And therefore, when the Lord Jesus Christ showed mercy to him, as well as to the other offenders whose cases I have enumerated, He showed that there was mercy in His heart for every sinner in this assembly—for every one, whatever the character of his offences against

God or against man may be. He "came to seek and to save that which was lost;" and if there is any one here who is lost—lost in ignorance, lost in sin, lost under the chain of passion, lost in pride, lost in rebellion and enmity of heart to God—lost now, and about to be lost in hell,—it was just for such a man that the Lord Jesus came into this world, that He might seek and save him. To all these he repeats by me to-day, what He said to such when he was upon earth—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavyladen, and I will give you rest." There is no burden so hard to bear, nothing that so crushes the strongest spirit, as the burden of unpardoned guilt and the dread of an angry retribution from an irresistible God; and to all who have that crushing burden—who know that there is an eternity coming, for which they are unprepared, and an infinite God whose wrath they may strive to bear in vain,—to them the Lord Jesus Christ says—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest." If you come, there is not one that does so who can have the remotest prospect of being repelled. He asks not the amount of your transgression—He knows it well; but whatever that amount may be, remember that He has said—"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Those who are led by grace, those whose rebellion of heart is subdued by the drawing of the Father, those upon whom His mercy comes, even in their feebleness and in their corruption, to draw them to the Saviour, convinced, confounded, appalled by the coming vengeance, and seeing the freeness and fulness of the salvation provided in Christ—they come; they come, that they may ask in humble faith to be accepted; and He accepts them at once. "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." So that there is mercy for the poorest in this congregation, for the most hopeless, for those that are nearest perdition, for those (if there be such) upon whose present condition and eternal state their believing friends around them have looked with the most hopeless consternation; yes, there is mercy for every one of them. Why do not all the sinners in this congregation welcome it? If there are unconverted here in numbers, mingling with the people of God, sitting by their side Sabbath after Sabbath—why do they not welcome this message of mercy, and at once seek and find pardon and peace, in that all-glorious, that all-sufficient Saviour?

But if the Lord Jesus has mercy for those who are yet sinners, and invites them by language the goodness of which cannot be surpassed—if He says to each of the unregenerate here, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely," asking neither money nor price, nor delaying it for one hour's sorrow or doubt, but offering His mercy to them just as they are,—then, my brethren, what must be His mercy to those whom He has sought out and saved? What must it be to the other part of this congregation—to those here who love Him, and serve Him, and trust Him, and have been saved by His grace, and are the heirs of heaven, and are on their road to its enjoyment? If He can so pity the ruined, ay, and the reprobate too—(for as He looked over that wicked city which was crowning centuries of rebellion against God by the worst crime of all, and was just about to imbrue its hands in the Saviour's blood, and just about to exclaim with horrid malice of God's anointed Messiah, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," as though He were not good enough for earth, and were only fit for torment hereafter, it is said that He "wept over it")—then what is His mercy to His own people? I trust I may place myself among you, my brethren, as one of His own people; I trust we may speak of that dear and blessed Saviour as our Saviour, to whom we already owe what language cannot express, or an eternity of devotedness repay. What a comfort it is to think of that Saviour—of all His power, and glory, and dignity, and irreversible dominion! But what an additional comfort it is

to think of Him as our "merciful high Priest," who has assumed our nature in order that He might be merciful, and that we might feel His mercy! Some few indications of that mercy let me now recall to you.

He has such mercy, that when He forgives a guilty sinner He does not wish at all to delay the blessings which He bestows upon him. It is no grudging pardon, it is no hardhearted pardon that He grants to a convicted and a converted rebel. When one who loved Him not renounces his unbelief and his rebellion, and becomes a penitent believer in Him, Christ has in store for him all the blessings which He came down on this earth to secure for His people. He has given various instances and proofs of this. Let me only mention one. We might have expected, when He converted and pardoned Saul of Tarsus—when he was at length humbled and subdued, and with an agitation of spirit which for three days kept him without eating and drinking, in a tumult of soul which it is scarcely possible for us to appreciate—when he said, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?"—trembling and astonished at finding that He whom he had persecuted was in very deed the Son of God,—the Lord Jesus might—(we should have supposed beforehand) have sentenced him at least to the obscurest position in His church—might have said, 'I pardon you, I manifest the riches of My grace in forgiving you, but you must not expect to have either peace or much of grace; you must wrestle with the faults your bad habits have engendered to your death—you must be doubted and distrusted by all your fellow Christians; you must meet with temptations which will often disturb your spirit, destroy your consistency, and bring you to shame; sorrow shall pursue you to the last hour, because you have so offended against Me.' But no; Christ said of him that day—'He is a chosen vessel unto Me;' Christ told him that He had appointed him to be His witness, and would commission him to be His apostle, to go far and wide, and tell sinners what grace He had shown to him. So that from that hour he received a commission, for which through all eternity he will still adore the goodness of his Redeemer. The brightest instance of the power of grace, and next to the Lord Jesus Christ perhaps the greatest benefactor to his species who ever lived—this character is reserved for one who had shown no symptoms of penitence to this hour, when (according to his own emphatic language) he was "apprehended" and arrested in his rebellion by Christ, and the Almighty power of grace laid hold on the rebel's will, and subdued and brought him to the Saviour;—that day were all covenanted blessings placed within his reach; and that day when any man receives Christ into his heart, whatever his past transgressions have been, all covenanted blessings are open to him. The Lord Jesus Christ knows of no reserve in the goodness which He manifests, but bids every sinner who receives pardon through His blood and is an adopted child of God, to look from that day, not for what he has become, but for what Christ is on his behalf, to have all the promises of the Gospel "yea and amen" in Christ to his soul, and to look for much light, clear views, large wisdom, great grace, victory over self and the world and the devil, increasing in the means of conformity to the mind and will of the Redeemer, and then a place among His people in blessedness. All this is open to every man the very day that he welcomes Christ and becomes an adopted child of God.

As our Lord has mercy for all who are brought by His grace thus to believe on Him, so He has mercy enough to give them the peace of His salvation, from the very moment that they believe. It is not His will—it is even injurious to suppose, that when any one is brought by grace to believe on Him, he must drag on some years of doubt and fear. No, from the very time that we welcome Christ into our hearts does He say to us, as He said to the weep-

ing penitent—"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." There is peace for all who welcome Christ, the very moment that their minds apprehend the great doctrines of His vicarious sacrifice and justification by His righteousness, and their hearts welcome that doctrine through grace. Recall the various instances of Christ's mercy to sinners who became His people; and I believe in every case you will find this very characteristic, that without a moment's delay He granted them "peace and joy in believing." That weeping penitent was sent away, her heart rejoicing in Divine love, in the boundless mercy of Christ to her soul, and she departed with a peace attained which Christ communicated, when He pronounced His benediction upon her. When Zaccheus welcomed Christ to his heart, as well as to his house, he received this intimation: "To-day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham." Those blessed words would remain in his memory, fixed for ever, indelibly engraven as on a rock. '*He* said it; *He* said, salvation was come to my wicked house; *He* said, I was a son of Abraham;' and day by day would he rejoice in the assurance which Christ had given him. So, when the dying thief gave that signal and astonishing manifestation of faith—when all the world was combined against the Redeemer, pouring its contempt and contumely on His sacred heart, high and low, rich and poor, heathen and Jew, an abandoned world combined to embitter His last hours by their unmitigated enmity—when this one man owned Him to be Lord, recognised His title to a universal throne, looked forward to His entering on His kingdom, and said, "Lord, remember me," Christ did not leave the poor sinner in doubt, as He might have done. He might have said—'I should be disgraced if I welcomed a thief to my friendship—if I took a felon into heaven with me, and let the world know it; you have blasphemed Me, and broken the law, and merited crucifixion—die there, un comforted and uncheered.' But no, the heart of Jesus was too generous and too good; and therefore, as soon as faith was manifested, peace was bestowed, and He said to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," giving him a cordial which the pain of death, and the breaking of his bones ere he departed, and all the shame which he had to endure on the tree of death, could not for one moment interrupt; and in a peaceful, humble silence, the saved sinner awaited the fulfilment of the promise, and looked to be with his Lord in glory. So of the gaoler—for time would fail me to enlarge. The moment that Paul told him that he which believed should be saved, he and his house welcomed the message, and rejoiced in the salvation which God had so wondrously sent to them. From the moment that Paul was thus cheered by the promise of a Saviour, then he entered with vigour and with confidence on those arduous and glorious duties to which the Saviour had called him. Thus in every case, peace was secured by the very act which secured their pardon; and the Lord Jesus Christ, in welcoming returning sinners to His friendship and His favour, gave them that assurance which secured their peace.

And is not this to tell us that the moment we believe also, we ought to have peace? Are there any here, who fancy that it is a becoming lowliness and fear and honour of the Saviour and of religion, that they who are not sufficiently pious should be in doubt and fear as to their acceptance, and go grieving and doubting along their pilgrimage to heaven, as though there were no peace to the freeborn children of God? It is all delusion; you know it to be so. Humble, simple reliance on the Redeemer not only ought to bring peace, but must do so. What, then, ought to be your trust and mine in Him! What ought we to feel to Him this day! I speak to those who have learned to love Him. What ought to be our lives! Does it depend upon our own experience in religion? Does it depend on our own progress in grace? It

secures progress and experience, but it does not depend upon it. Our peace ought to be built solely on the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our sincere and unreserved reliance on Him to accomplish it. That is the one foundation of a believer's peace. Build it on anything else, and it is on the sand, and will never stand the tempest; but here ought believers to rest their hope—on the finished work of Christ, His fulness of love, His readiness to save, the certainty of His promises, and His assurance that He will do all this for them that trust Him. In the exercise of that simple reliance ought each of His followers to have peace in Him; and with the joy that comes from believing the world is crucified, the flesh is mortified, the devil is subdued, grace is daily strengthened, and the Christian character formed to its completeness. This, then, is His mercy to His people.

But still, though He thus opens to them all the treasures of the covenant of grace, and grants to them all the peace that belongs to believing, yet in this world of vicissitude and weakness, there must be many sorrows. There are circumstances which must try the spirit; and the Lord Jesus Christ has mercy enough to meet all these—for He assumed this nature of ours in order that He might manifest to us and enable us to feel assured of His sympathy with us in all such trials. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." It is, therefore, the sure Word of God, that our Saviour, having taken our nature, sympathises with our infirmities—with all the weaknesses we feel in the various sorrows, difficulties, doubts and troubles of life. He manifested when upon earth this sympathy to all who needed it. When He saw the multitude around Him, who had been led to take long journeys across the wilderness to hear the words of life from His lips, and they were faint with hunger, He told His disciples that He "had compassion" on the multitude, and therefore employed His almighty power to feed them there in the desert. When He saw others, who had come from a distance, bringing their sick relations with them, for Him to heal them, again it is said that "Jesus had compassion on them, and healed their sick." Human sorrow always seemed sacred to Him, and He thought no trouble too insignificant for His pity and regard. When His disciples would keep from Him little children, as unworthy of His notice, our Lord felt the same compassion for their infantine weakness. He gazed, as perhaps many of you have done, with great compassion on the weakness of a little child, not knowing what, in this world of temptation and trial, might befall it. So Jesus looked, yet not with our ignorance; and when His disciples would keep the children from Him, He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." When they would keep a man from Him, as unworthy of His notice, and the multitude would hush his outcries for mercy, and blind Bartemeus persevered, because he knew the heart of Jesus better than they did, "Lord, have mercy upon me," the Lord stopped in His triumphant procession, and would not be kept from a poor blind beggar, but desired him to be brought, and then poured upon his eyeballs the light which was to cheer him in this world, while it communicated to him that joy which death itself could not defeat. And He is able to sympathise with all those infirmities and sorrows which His people in this world are exposed to.

It may be that some of you, my brethren, who love the Saviour and have experienced great consolation by grace, are yet, according to His own inscrutable wisdom, permitted to undergo a discipline of suffering, that you may be prepared for a life to which you are looking forwards, in which suffering will never enter; for when He is your own Shepherd, and you the sheep of His flock, He will lead you to living fountains of water, and dry up every tear.

But sometimes it is His will that tears should flow, often fast and frequent, now; yet they are tears He notices, and which He loves to controul. The mercy of Jesus pursues you every day, and is around you everywhere. In it you are allowed to trust; and of Him, no less than of His Father, does the apostle say, "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." But there is one case in which we might less be disposed to trust the mercy of Jesus than in any other; there is a condition in which we feel ourselves peculiarly unworthy of mercy, in which it seems to us most just and fit that no mercy should be extended. And yet it is precisely in these circumstances that the mercy of our High Priest preeminently shines forth. Oh! that we were what we ought to be, that we might serve Him with a sinlessness of purpose and of heart! Oh! that we could follow Him fully, and manifest that blamelessness of character of which He himself has given us the pattern! He has set a pattern to us—He bids us follow it. It is the prerogative of our great Head, to have in His life embodied all the noblest principles of His law, and to personify that glory to which His law would bring all that obey it. But alas! our principles are often much higher than our practice, our experience falls far short of our desires; we do not live as we pray; we dishonour by inconsistency the name we would live to glorify. While we thus do Him dishonour, by inconsistency of temper or of conduct, would it not seem just, that when He has especially entrusted His honour to us in this world, and we abandon the trust, He should leave us to suffer long and suffer much, destroy our peace, take away our confidence, forbid all access to Him, pour doubt upon the understanding and disquietude into the heart? But it is no such thing. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Not if any man suffer well—not if any man nobly dare—not if any man is devoted in his life—not if any man consecrates all his faculties to the glory of Him that saved him—all which is due; but "if any man sin," if any man is inconsistent, if any man dishonour Him by yielding to temptation, and yet is humble and penitent, and comes back to God through Christ, there is no delay of mercy, no refusal of comfort. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Oh! the abundant mercy of our loving Lord! How can we trust Him enough, how love Him sufficiently, who has manifested all this mercy for the very purpose that we might simply, humbly and justly trust Him? For this is the use the apostle would have us make of this gracious assurance. As "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let us therefore believe Him to be as good as He is; let us look off from ourselves; and when we most distinctly perceive that we merit nothing but to be repelled from the throne of grace, abandoned from the goodness of God, left to our own folly and our own perverseness,—then let us come with confidence to the throne of grace, to receive pardon, to have peace poured into our souls, to recover the strength we have lost, to set out with new vigour along the road to heaven, to look onwards and upwards, to bear trials, to beat down Satan under our feet, to trample on "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and to attain those moral victories to which we are all summoned by His goodness.

Lay hold on this truth, my brethren: He is on all occasions suited to your need. Because Christ is merciful, because He is all-sufficient, because He asks for no other plea to be employed and no other ground of reliance to be sought but Himself; "therefore come boldly to the throne of grace," day by day, for all your wants, temporal and eternal, and according to the necessities which

sin as well as suffering imposes upon you : “ come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

But again : if He gives us this great consolation through His mercy, then let us ask ourselves solemnly what kind of life becomes us who have learned the friendship of so good a Master, so gracious a Redeemer. We are called His people ; through grace we are so ; we are bound to trust Him and love Him ; this is our very characteristic—it is the badge we bear—it is the livery we have assumed. We are Christ’s followers, saved by grace, redeemed by the Son of God, hoping to be with Him for ever in heaven, looking for His great and glorious return, when all His people shall be gathered into His presence, and all His enemies trampled beneath His feet. How, then, should we live ? “ The life which I now live in the flesh,” said the redeemed and changed apostle, “ I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Because He has had this wondrous love, and came to die upon the cross, that He might save our guilty souls, and each believer in this congregation may say, “ He loved *me* and gave Himself for me,” then it follows necessarily that the life we live in the flesh must be a life of faith ; in other words, a life entirely modelled and governed, wholly determined in spirit, and in heart by the view we take of Christ’s redeeming love. “ The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.” Go forth, believers, to live it. Carry this truth from these walls to-day, with the full intention of acting out what the apostle himself did ; doing as he did who was a noble example which Divine grace has set up for our imitation.

But further : if we are thus led to seek to give Him honour in the world, ought we not, my brethren, to manifest the same mercy to others which He has manifested to us ? If Jesus is indeed a merciful Saviour, then we ought to be His merciful followers. You know in how many ways He makes true His words—“ Blessed are the merciful ;” and it is not the least part of that blessedness, that it is an approximation to His own glory. He is the most blessed, because the most merciful ; ay, and the whole universe rejoices for ever in His own words—“ Blessed are the merciful.” Blessed is that merciful Redeemer. There is such an income of gratitude and love awaiting Him, as will fill His own heart. “ He shall see” in this, as in many other things, “ of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied,” when the uncounted myriads of His redeemed people shout out with untiring gratitude—“ Blessed are the merciful.” And all those who enter into His spirit are blessed too. Be merciful, my Christian friends, just as Christ is merciful. Be merciful one to another ; be merciful to your enemies ; be merciful to sinners ; be merciful to saints ; and ask yourselves day by day—How can I imitate and exalt the mercy of my great and loved Redeemer ?

There are some among you, my brethren, to-day, who in some measure, I trust, are endeavouring to honour the blessed Saviour, by following Him in His mercy. There are some of you set apart this day, to honour and glorify Him in this congregation among your fellow Christians—men, I trust, who like the earliest deacons of the church of Christ, are “ full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.” It is a blessing to have such brethren among you, who will, I hope, adorn their calling through a long life of consistency and usefulness. I ask you to pray for them ; that when they take upon them this office, to sustain your pastor in his work, and to help the church of God in this place—to help on their prosperity in every way—they may be gifted with heavenly wisdom, and blessed with grace to be consistent, and show forth in their lives, in their houses, and in their ministry which they now assume, all those virtues of the apostolic character, in which the Lord Jesus Christ may be exalted, and their fellow Christians aided in their heavenly progress. May His grace and mercy

rest upon them for the fulfilment of His work, and upon His own church in this place.

And finally, in closing this address, let me once more remind those who have "no part nor lot in this matter" as yet—those who are not believers, not converted, not godly persons—not those, therefore, who love God through Christ—that there is mercy enough in the heart of Jesus to reach their case, and that they may share with the Christians around them in all those temporal and eternal blessings which the Gospel brings. They may, if their hearts are subdued and they turn to God; but whether they will is utterly doubtful—especially if Sabbath after Sabbath they have, perhaps for months or years, listened to the proclamation of mercy, and witnessed the lives of Christian companions, in vain. It is God alone that can draw their hearts to Himself. They have never sought His mercy yet—perhaps they never will seek it; and therefore I would solemnly leave upon their consciences the fact, that their day of mercy may at any moment close. They may grow harder and harder, death may find them incapable of repenting, and eternity only see them wake up as lost souls, who refused the mercy of Christ. If there be any thing painful in the history of man, it is when the mercy of the Redeemer himself changes into wrath, and when men are found among that number who would wish the loftiest mountain to crush them, that they might not meet His face, or to plunge into the profoundest ocean, that they might not bear His wrath, but in vain; the ocean will cast out its dead, and the rocks will be deaf to their cries. There will come a day when those who refuse to turn to God, will in vain implore the help of the universe (which has no hope for them) rather than stand before that Lamb of God whose mercy they have despised and whose wrath they have dared. Do not, my brethren, so. Sinners! whoever are here this day! let me as a friend beseech you to go home to reflect upon this fact—that the Lord Jesus Christ is as merciful as He is great, and that the time of mercy may at any moment cease, and you may be summoned to give an account for which you are unprepared. Let not, then, this Sabbath go by, without on your bended knees imploring the Divine grace, that you may be drawn to Christ, and be numbered among His happy people.

MOSES CALLED OF GOD.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. DANIEL MOORE, M.A.

PREACHED IN CAMDEN CHURCH, CAMBERWELL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1849.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian : and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush : and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."—Exodus iii. 1, 2.

FROM the history of Joseph, our church, with obvious propriety, passes on to that of Moses. This is another of those illustrious worthies, who light up the pages of history, who give a character of greatness to the age in which they live, and who seem to bind up the fortunes of their individual life with the moral and social destinies of mankind.

After the event which we were considering last Sunday, the family of Jacob was transplanted into Egypt, there to dwell under the direction and care of Joseph ; and not only during the life of Joseph, but for many years afterwards ; they continued to experience from the Egyptians great consideration and kindness. The wise and patriarchal rule of this eminent governor, the large debt of gratitude which was felt to be owing to him by the nation at large, and his singularly unselfish administration of public affairs, were benefits which even a whole generation could not entirely forget. But "another king arose ; who knew not Joseph," and knew not what his family owed to Joseph ; and his succession was a signal for the most violent outbreaks of national jealousy. The people saw rising in their very midst a foreign population, powerful both in strength and numbers, and they immediately had recourse to all the low craft and stratagem of states, to keep them down: Heavy burdens, hard tasks, unrighteous exactions, were imposed on the poor Israelites, in order to check (if they had any) ambitious thoughts of territorial aggrandisement. But the more Pharaoh afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. As in the instance which we were considering last Sunday, so it turned out in this case : everything they did, and everything they planned, just served to further the accomplishment of the Divine purposes, just made way for the advent of that great light of Jewish antiquity, who should be at once the deliverer and the saviour of his nation, as well as the glorious type of Him, who was to deliver and save mankind.

Passing over the early history of this eminent man, I invite you to consider, as the subject for meditation this evening, the calling of Moses, or the Divine appearance vouchsafed to him from the burning bush ; and the two points to which I would especially invite your attention are—first, the time chosen for this calling ; and secondly, the circumstances connected with it.

I. I first invite you to consider the time chosen of God for calling Moses. This will be found to be a most important matter for our consideration, as it seems to illustrate some great general principles, upon which God calls agents in any and every class of life, to do His work.

I observe, first, with regard to the time selected for calling Moses, that it was after the failure of many lawfully cherished hopes. The years of Moses' life are remarkably divided into three periods of forty years each; the first during which he was a sojourner in Pharaoh's court, the second during which he was fulfilling the calling of a shepherd in the land of Midian, and the third when in the providence of God he was called upon to reign as a king in Jeshurun. The event we are to consider to-night occurred at the close of the second of these periods. The first had been spent by Moses in obvious and direct preparation for his future office. He was acquiring the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians; he was making himself master of the rudiments of civil government, and was qualifying himself for standing in the presence of Pharaoh, on the one hand, and for being the lawgiver and ruler of a great people, on the other.

There can be no doubt that from the earliest period of his life Moses had a strong persuasion of his future destination to a post of great honour and usefulness; nay, more, he seems to have felt that his own countrymen must have shared in this persuasion; for, as you will remember, Stephen in his apology says that Moses "supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." How Moses became possessed of this conviction—whether he inferred it from the mysterious Providence which had saved his life, when every male infant born at the time had been consigned to destruction, or whether he learned it from the teaching of a pious mother during the first few years of his life, as she dwelt with him in Pharaoh's court, or whether this fact was made the subject of special Divine revelation from heaven itself—are questions which we cannot determine. Suffice it, that on attaining the age of forty years, it "came into the heart of Moses to go and visit his brethren." He had a feeling that the time was come, when he must quit the luxurious indolence of a court, and enter at once on his great office of national deliverer.

His attempt, as you know, proved unsuccessful. The Hebrews had neither confidence in his mission, nor sympathy with those generous sacrifices which he had made; and at last stung by disappointment, and urged on, it may be, from a sense of personal danger, he was compelled to fly from the presence of his countrymen, to dwell as a stranger in the land of Midian. What was the cause of this failure on the part of Moses? Whether he had impatiently anticipated God's providential purposes, or whether he was unduly elated with his expected appointment, or whether he had entered on his duties with an unseemly and an unfitting warmth, does not appear.

That which we may especially learn from this part of the history is this—that severe worldly disappointments are the the best preparations for religious usefulness; in other words, that the failure of lawful and spiritual aims may be the very means which God chooses to employ, to bring about their eventual success. Thus, no aim could have been more lawful than that of Moses, and (as we should say) no time more fitting to set about it. His countrymen were in deep distress; his influence in the country was established; his wisdom had attained to a ripe maturity, and he had arrived then just at that age which we should single out as the age for great deeds and vigorous actions. All, therefore, would seem to have been meet and proper. But man's fitness is not God's fitness, and man's time may not be God's time. A great deliverer, a mighty prophet—above all, one who should be an antitype of Him who "had not where to lay His head"—must not be educated in palaces only; he must eat the bread of adversity, he must taste the bitter cup of mortification and disappointment, he must live out all self-seeking and ambitious aims, until he shall be fit for the Lord's work. The greatness which he once sought may then be thrust upon him, and the contented shepherd may become a prince against his will.

Brethren, keep this lesson constantly before you, when you desire to compass any great spiritual object. Present success, remember, is not to be looked for : whether you have a pious design to originate, or a benevolent work to speed, or an individual soul to save, the first step to success will most probably be bitter disappointment. You suppose that those whom you design to benefit will believe that God by your hand designs to deliver them ; but they will not believe this—on the contrary, they will spurn and they will reject you ; they will not have your proffered guidance, but will leave you, in the bitterness of disappointed hope, to see your own helplessness and the necessity of waiting for God's time.

But observe, secondly, the time chosen for calling Moses to this great work was when he was pursuing contentedly the duties of his humble, but useful calling. " Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian." The power of at once adapting itself to altered and less fortunate circumstances, is one of the marks of a great mind ; the want of it is the great bane of all commercial and social life. How rarely will you see a man who can meet difficulty with a bold and honest front ! How often do even good men seem to stumble at that stumblingblock ! How often are the meanest artifices resorted to, and the most desperate schemes tried—nay, even palpable dishonesties had recourse to—in order to delay for a few weeks or months, a crisis, the arrival of which the man knows to be as certain as the rising of the morrow's sun ! Let such learn wisdom from the example of Moses. Persuaded that there was one directing Mind to shape all human aims—that it was not in man to give promotion, to set up one as a prince, or to put down another to the rank of a shepherd,—he no sooner found himself driven from Egypt, than he threw himself on the times and circumstances—God his trust, heaven his home, Providence his guide—and having accepted the first hospitality he met with, we are told by the sacred historian, he was at once " content to dwell with the man."

Ah ! my brethren, why was Moses thus at once content to cast in his future fortunes with a stranger, and to dwell in his house ? Read on, and you will see. The fear of God was in that house. It was a priest of Midian who had shown him that hospitality ; and doubtless, he had not passed one night under that hospitable roof, without perceiving that each day a cloud of incense ascended to the living God. And this it was, that at once decided the course of Moses ; this, more than all the treasures of Egypt, more than all the acquirements of the schools, more than all the gilded and cushioned ease of a palace, contented his pious soul. Oh ! that all servants had such a principle regulating their choice—that they would feel it is better to serve under a roof where God is worshipped, than to be a guest in a palace where God is not known !

Moses, then, settled down to his new employment. Hands unused to labour must ply the daily task ; the soft seats of palaces must be exchanged for the hard green sward ; and in choosing the best pastures for a flock of sheep must be employed the resources of a richly-cultivated mind. Moses not only takes to these duties, but continues in them ; conceiving that God had sent him thither, he resolves to abide in the calling whereto he was called. He began to think, perhaps, on looking back to his former failures, that he had mistaken his mission. At all events, he would not outrun Heaven's purposes ; he would just fill his niche in the great human temple, and await the bidding of Heaven for his removal. In this way passed forty years more. And while he was thus giving himself to the duties of his new calling, fired (it may be) with no higher ambition than how best he should provide pastures for Jethro's flock, a voice from the burning bush calls him from his long obscurity, and bids him go forth to the flock of God.

Brethren, the great lesson I would have you draw from this portion of Moses' history, is the honour which God puts upon contented obscurity. There is a

strange tendency in many of us to think that our merits are overlooked—that we have qualifications for a much higher station than that in which it has pleased Providence to place us, and that if we could but just jostle out of their places some of the present occupants, the world would be much better and we much happier for the change. Our history instructs us of the sin and the folly of all such views. It teaches us that the place of usefulness, the place of honour, the place of blessing, is just where God puts us, and nowhere else. If we are not useful in obscurity, it is not eminence that will make us useful. He who cannot learn to submit, is very ill fit to rule. Contentment with our lot then, be it to wield a sceptre or to carry a crook, this is happiness, and this is usefulness. “Some people complain,” said an old writer, “that they are buried alive. Well, if they are,” he adds, “let them shine like lamps in their sepulchres.” At all events, we may be sure of this, that true Christian light needs no adventitious aids to set it off; it shines anywhere, and it shines everywhere. You may glorify God in the estate of a servant, and be training for greatness whilst tending a flock of sheep.

There is one other observable point connected with the time chosen for the calling of Moses, namely, that it appears to have been a time of meditation and devout retirement. “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.” You observe it is said here, “he led the flock to the backside of the desert;” and most commentators are agreed, that the purpose for which Moses had gone thither was that of retired communion with God, probably for the purpose of pouring out special intercessions for his distressed and afflicted countrymen. At all events we may be quite sure, that it was for the purpose of deepening the tone of his religious habits, that Moses was sent down into Midian at all. Remember, he was to foreshadow One who spent thirty years in unnoticed obscurity, to learn in lowly silence and submission the great lesson of practical obedience. How unseemly would it have been, then, for Moses to have passed at once from the noise and activity of a court, without any intervening seclusion, to be placed at the head of a great people! We may not doubt, therefore, that it was in sacred retirement, in the deep solitude of the desert, where Moses often held high and holy converse with the Father of spirits, that he learned to throw off any remains which might cleave to him of early ambition—that it was there he was taught to “endure as seeing Him who is invisible,” and with an eye that looked beyond the vicissitudes of earthly things, to “have respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

And this, brethren, may be a useful lesson to us. The want of stated periods for devout retirement is the greatest religious failing of our age. We have fewer bright visions of God upon the Mount, because we have fewer holy communings with Him on the backside of the desert. The devotions of the day may suffice for the temptations of the day; but if we would rise to any eminent attainments in the Divine life—if we would have our face radiant with spiritual brightness, from communing with God on the Mount—we must often lead our thoughts to the backside of the desert, and there be alone with Him.

II. I now proceed to notice, more briefly, in the second place, some circumstances connected with this appearance. “The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”

Here the first thing which occurs to us to notice, is the person appearing. He is called “the angel of the Lord;” but a few verses afterwards you will find He is spoken of thus—“I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;” thus conducting us to the obvious

conclusion, that (as in several other passages of the Old Testament) this "angel of the Lord" was none other than the Angel of the covenant, the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, taking a visible form in order that He might condescend to speak to man. Brethren, how confirmatory of our best and brightest hopes are these revealed glimpses, which in every age and under every dispensation have been given to man ! They seem to give a practical reality to that great truth of the apostle, that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." Yes, whether He lead His people through the wilderness, whether He wrestle with the patriarch till the break of day, whether He hang upon the cross in disregarded agony, whether He be seated on the throne of God to wield boundless and irresistible power, whether He pity or whether He pray, whether He suffer or whether He reign, Jesus is still the same, unchanged and unchangeable.

But note, next, the mysterious form of the appearance. It is that of fire which did not harm—a bush enveloped in flame, and yet not a leaf consumed. Brethren, we have in this a few holy and deeply instructive emblems. First, there is an emblem of an oppressed church, more especially of the Jewish at this time—oppressed, but not cast down ; brought low, but not in despair ; exposed to the fire of persecution, but having One in the midst thereof, to keep that fire from burning.

And it is also a type of individual souls. They, too, may be in the midst of the fire, whether from outward assaults or from inward temptations ; they, too, may have to take up the language of St. Paul, and to say—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed." No, our God is in the midst of the fire ; and though the flame may burn, and the brightness may dazzle, and the warmth may scorch remoter objects, yet to us who are in the midst, it is but a faint flame—the bush is not consumed.

But I think we also have in this appearance an emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will observe that we have here the most potent of the elements of nature holding back its powers of destruction. And what is this but an emblem of Jesus restraining His powers of vengeance, and showing compassion and pity to the weakest and tenderest of His children ? Oh ! yes, my brethren, realise as much as you will the compassion and love of Jesus ; believe that He is ever with you in the midst of the bush ; only remember that He is a flame still, and the devouring properties are only held in merciful abeyance ; and that, once angered, once rejected, once forgotten, even the lamb may put on wrath, and Christ become "a consuming fire."

Let us separate with one solemn reflection. How awful must be a visible meeting with God ! In the case we have been considering, the bright presence was mercifully veiled ; and yet one who for forty years had been living in communion with spiritual and eternal things, was so overwhelmed with terror that he hid his face—he could not look upon God. Brethren, let us oftentimes consider how *we* shall look upon God—how we shall be able to meet Him in that day, when, in all the unveiled glories of eternity, the blessed One shall be seated on His throne—when "all nations shall be gathered before Him, and He shall separate the righteous and the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Oh ! if ye would be prepared for that most awful meeting, meet with Him often now ; converse with Him often now ; speak to Him face to face now. Meet Him in the closet, with holy and heavenly thoughts ; meet Him in the world, with an upward look for His Divine approval on all you do ; meet Him in the church, with spiritual and heartfelt and living sacrifices ; meet Him at His table, with a sense of hungering and thirsting for righteousness. So shall you be able to stand unmoved when the mountains are fleeing from His presence ; and though surrounded by a fire which consumes all material things, not a hair of your head shall be injured.

GLAD TIDINGS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. C. F. CHILDE, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ISLINGTON,
ON THE EVENING OF EASTER DAY, APRIL 8, 1849.

"Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen."—Matthew xxviii. 5, 6.

WHEN the bondwoman and her son were cast out from the family of the patriarch, and their water was spent as they wandered in the wilderness, we read that Hagar, forgetful of the word of promise, that her seed should not be numbered for multitude, and judging only from present providences, abandoned herself to grief and despondency. In momentary expectation of the death of her child, and yet unable to endure the agony of witnessing it, she "sat down over against him a good way off, and lifted up her voice and wept." Meanwhile, she remained unconscious, till God in mercy opened her eyes, telling her that a supply was at hand ; and a well of water was at once discovered, to restore life, and strength, and hope and joy.

Just so it was with the disciples of Jesus, after the crucifixion of their Lord and Master. Swift to forget the word which even His enemies remembered—"After three days I will rise again"—they seem to have regarded His tomb as the sepulchre of their hopes and prospects. This their infirmity was at the same time their punishment ; for it not only overwhelmed them with present grief, but prevented them from realising the consolation which was so immediately in store for them. Meanwhile, however, though they were slow of heart to believe, they were at once hearty and devoted in effort ; and unable as they might be to rejoice in the Lord, He was still the one whom their soul loved. This was eminently the case with those devoted women who had followed Him from Galilee to Gethsemane, who had formed part of His sorrowing escort to Calvary, and stood by His cross and watched Him when other lovers and friends stood aloof, and had not quitted the sacred scene, till they had observed Him safely laid in the tomb in which the pious care of Joseph of Arimathea had deposited His remains. Returning to the city, their first concern was to purchase aromatic spices and ointment wherewith to anoint the body, so soon as the Sabbath was past. This was the errand on which Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome had now come to the sepulchre. It was early on the first day of the week ; and so soon as they arrived they received from angel lips the salutation of the text—"Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here : for He is risen."

Lift up your hearts in prayer, beloved brethren, that He may now condescend to teach us by His Holy Spirit, whilst we consider from this precious portion of His Word the encouragements administered, and the tidings announced.

The encouragements which this heavenly messenger administers to the sorrowing women were twofold : first, He calms their apprehensions, and then He approves their errand.

The terms in which He calms their apprehensions suggest a passing inquiry into the cause of their alarm. It is stated in the second verse, that "behold, there was a great earthquake : for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." The probability is, that the women were not actually witnesses of the earthquake, or of the descent of the angel, but arrived at the scene immediately afterwards. Intent, as we learn from another evangelist, on anointing the body of their Lord, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from

the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great." Now it should be remembered, that it was yet quite dark; and when everything around was wrapped in gloom, the only object which distinctly met their view was the resplendent form of this ministering spirit, dazzling with the intense brilliancy of the lightning's flash, and robed in snow-white raiment. That such a spectacle, so unexpected and so unearthly, was in itself calculated to excite alarm, we may gather from the effects it produced on the minds of other witnesses. The Roman soldiers, who had been appointed by the chief priests and Pharisees, under Pilate's sanction, to guard the sepulchre—men who had been in perils frequent, in deaths oft, but in fear and in fright never—were panic-stricken at the sight; so that "for fear of the angel"—such is the energetic description in the verse preceding the text—"the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."

Now it is in marked distinction from these enemies, who had so lately been concerned in mocking and crucifying the Lord of glory, and who were now employed by the Sanhedrim in endeavouring to falsify His word, that the trembling and devoted women of Galilee are so graciously encouraged in the text. "Fear not ye," says the glorious being that communed with them; and then, the rather to reassure them, he approves their errand—"For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." So rare is the intercourse between earth and heaven, so conscious are the best of our race of their unfitness for such intercourse, that we seldom read of angel visits having been vouchsafed to the most favoured saints of the Lord, without their producing transient emotions of alarm. It was so here. Even the milder effulgence of that countenance which had withered the sight and blanched the spirit of the Roman soldiers, teeming as it did with heavenly glory amid that dark and dismal scene, filled these holy women with involuntary fear. How calculated, then, to soothe their terror was the address which thus recognised them as friends, and owned and approved their labour of love! It was as though the angel had said—'Your heart and your name are known to me. When you stole forth under the cover of the night, weeping, and bearing your burden of fragrant spices, I marked your footsteps, I counted your tears, and now wait by His command who so lately reposed here, to speak a word of comfort and of peace to you. "Fear not ye," therefore; it is for the enemies of the Lord to fear, but not for you; "for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." Your love has surmounted the terror and despised the shame of His cross; and now you have come, in the midst of darkness and in the face of enemies, to pay (as you conceived) the last sad tribute of respect and affection to His person.'

Notwithstanding, however, that these were good words of comfort, they would have failed of their object to calm and to cheer these mourners, had not He who spake them followed them up by communicating the glad tidings of the Saviour's resurrection. "He is not here: for He is risen." At the same time to say "I know that ye seek Jesus," and then to say "He is not here," would have been to add to their grief. This is clear from the touching complaint of Mary Magdalene—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." But when the angel proceeded to assure them of the reason why the body which they had seen deposited in the tomb was there no longer—the Prince of life was risen from the dead—whatever their opinion of the fact might have been, it could not fail to prove the resurrection of their buried hopes and joys. They had come to the sepulchre seeking a dead body—they departed, in fear, indeed, but still in great joy, to announce a living Christ.

Such, beloved brethren, is an outline of the circumstances connected with our text, viewed simply as an historical narrative; and even when so regarded they possess no ordinary interest. Seeing, however, that these things were "written for our learning," let us at once proceed to apply the incident, and more especially the facts which have passed under our consideration, according to the method already pursued.

Our review, then, of the angel's message to these devoted women will lead us to examine what lessons we may gather, first, from the encouragements

which he administered, and secondly, from the tidings which he announced.

We have already seen that the encouragements with which this heavenly messenger was charged were distinct and exclusive in character. It is obviously, therefore, important, that we should bear in mind the class to whom they were addressed, in order to determine how far we are entitled to suck from the breasts of their consolations.

"I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." These are simple, but pregnant terms, in which those whom the Lord thus delighted to comfort are addressed. And so, dear brethren, I do indeed rejoice in being this night sent with a message of encouragement and assurance to a particular class in this congregation. In its most comprehensive acceptance, the class embraces all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. The children of the most High are described as "the generation of those who seek Him." They are called by grace—"Seek ye My face;" they through grace obey the call, and reply in the spirit of adoption—"Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee;" and this, which is their occupation in the beginning of their career, remains such to the end. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," says the apostle after thirty years seeking, "but," he continues, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press"—I still press—"towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Whilst, however, there is ample warrant for saying to all who have clearly set their heart to seek the Lord, "Fear not ye," the analogy of our text leads me rather to address the anxious penitent, the tried disciple, the bruised reed of this congregation. Amidst the many—alas! how very many—worldly, indifferent, vain, thoughtless, sensual and covetous hearers—the mixed multitude, who form so large a proportion of every such assembly as this—it may be that there is here and there one, in whose soul the Spirit of God has been effectually at work. You have been made sensible of your lost estate as a sinner in the sight of God; every blind and perverse attempt to escape or to stifle the voice of conscience has failed; like a stricken deer, whom the archers have sorely grieved and shot at, you bear the barbed arrow of conviction rankling in your breast. That career of pleasure or of vanity, so bright and so sweet in prospect, oh! what an aching void, and what remorse, more bitter than the gall of asps, has it left behind! And now there come ever and anon to your remembrance the scenes and the incidents of earlier and better days—the lessons and tears and gentle admonitions of a pious mother—the prayer she taught you, the Bible she gave you, the texts you learned, the hymns you sang in childhood; but these, so far from being joyous recollections, only wring your heart and call forth scalding tears. You feel that early privileges and early impressions have but increased your responsibility and aggravated your guilt. At length your sin has found you out; it may not in every case have been a course of profligacy, or even of dissipation, but simply of alienated forgetfulness of God, indifference to the love of a crucified Saviour, or resistance to the pleadings of the Spirit of grace; and now, through the mercy of that same God, you are made sensible of the reality of your case, of the heinousness of your sin, of the danger of your position. Strange as it now appears, that you could have been so infatuated and so desperate in your enmity against God, it seems more mysterious that He should have borne with you and spared you up to the present moment. Whatever may be the opinion of friends or of companions respecting you, "honest and lovely and of good report" as they may judge you to be, you have a more faithful and discriminating witness within you, which tells you that all these your righteousnesses are "as filthy rags." Conscience bears witness against you, and testifies that God was not in all your thoughts, that love to Him and a desire for His glory never actuated your endeavours, and that consequently, had it been possible for you to have rendered outwardly the obedience of heaven, it would have been as really an abomination as the disobedience of heaven; your

motive would have spoilt it all. You, now, therefore, feel what you have often insincerely or carelessly expressed—"There is no health in me."

This, then, has been the first stage in your religious experience. The Spirit of God has convinced you, that whilst you have been living for self and sin, seeking pleasure, seeking admiration, seeking gain, you have not yet been seeking Jesus. It is an important point to gain here; it is a revelation of character and condition, which sooner or later must be made to all. If effectually made here, the discovery may be at once timely and salutary; only unhappy is that man who first becomes sensible of his position then when it is too late, and there where it is in vain to seek for a remedy. Oh! what would I give to know, that every one of you would this night go in sincerity to his knees, and ask of God saying, 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may discover my real state in Thy sight; let me not be deceived; let me not deceive myself; let me not only see, but feel the reality of my position!'

But the class which I had in view is not yet fully portrayed. The Spirit of truth, I will suppose, has proceeded yet further in His work of illumination, and having first convinced you of your need of a Saviour, has further convinced you of the all-sufficiency of Jesus as that Saviour. You know and are persuaded that there is none other name given under heaven—no other method, either independent of His work or concurrent with it, whereby you can be saved; His blood you believe to be the one propitiation, His obedience the only righteousness of lost and penitent sinners; you have not a doubt that the satisfaction He has made is sufficient to blot out all the debt of your transgressions; you have no misgivings as to the entire and eternal security of all who believe in Him. But you fear that you have not, as an individual, part or lot in this great salvation. Though freely offered to you, proclaimed, indeed, to all, you fear that somehow or other you may be the exception. The great and (as you conceive) the conclusive reason for this apprehension is, that you have been so wilfully rebellious, have resisted so much grace, striven against such strivings, stopped your ears against "charming never so wisely," hardened your heart against love so constraining, that although there may be pardon for the guilty, you cannot realise that there is a clear and decided hope for you. You fear that the day of grace may be past; you fear that the door of mercy may be closed; you fear, in short, that you may just be the individual whose guilt an infinite mercy cannot reach—your sins have so abounded, that even infinite grace cannot superabound. Ah! brethren, this wretched uncertainty is but the natural, I had almost said the necessary fruit of past wilfulness and rebellion; those who sow in presumption can scarcely fail to reap in despondency; a harvest of doubt and fears will be the tormenting produce of obstinate and deliberate resistance to the motions of the Comforter. Critical to the very last degree is the condition of a sinner thus far enlightened. Clear as may be his views of evangelical truth, and distinct as may be his apprehensions of the plan of salvation, two dangers will beset him. His will, on the one hand, may have become so completely prostrate as to be utterly indisposed to seek salvation in Christ. Even future ruin, certain and clearly defined as it is to his view, seems preferable to immediate effort and to instant repentance. On the other hand, his convictions may be so overpowering and his alarm so great, as to suggest the hopelessness of seeking to escape from the wrath to come.

On such a crisis, beloved brethren, every thing turns; the question of life or death, of heaven or hell, depends upon one thing—whether you "seek," and persevere in seeking. Be yours the case which I have thus described, of a convinced sinner—be it that of an awakened backslider, or of a buffeted disciple—you are equally weary and heavy-laden, you alike need rest to your souls, you all want pardon and peace. You can find them nowhere but in Jesus. Are you sensible of this? and are you seeking accordingly? To you, then, is the word of this encouragement sent: "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." You may be like these women, seeking (as it were) in the dark, in sorrow and in much trembling, in much infirmity and in the face of many dangers; nevertheless, do you resolve to seek Jesus

still, and especially as a crucified Saviour. Seek pardon, righteousness, rest, food, salvation, life, in Him alone. Seek Him where He is to be found—revealed in the Word, present in ordinances, waiting to be gracious on His throne of grace. Seek Him above all, in private—in secret prayer, in continuous heartfelt communion, pouring out your soul to Him, crying “with groanings which cannot be uttered” before Him.

Then, beloved brethren, the word is suitable and designed for you: “Fear not ye.” Whosoever amongst you are at this moment so seeking Jesus as to commit the keeping of your souls to Him alone, yielding yourselves daily to Him, to be taught, washed, sanctified, renouncing every plea and abandoning every dependence save His blood and righteousness: “fear not ye!” “Fear not” sin—that is, the condemning power of sin. Unable as you may be to realise the blessing, you are already perfectly and for ever freely and fully justified. Remember, the declaration, “We are justified by faith,” does not mean faith in the act of our justification, but faith in the finished work of Jesus, and an actual application to our souls of His all-sufficiency. “Fear not” the law; tremble not, that is, at its curse; Jesus, whom ye seek, “hath redeemed you from the curse of the law, being made a curse for you.” “Fear not” Satan—as though he could prevail to pluck the true sheep out of the Shepherd’s hand; Jesus, whom ye seek, “hath spoiled principalities” and Satan, and the powers of darkness. “Fear not” the world; its temptations, as though they were absolutely irresistible, or its frowns, as though they were overpoweringly formidable. Doubtless they are to flesh and blood; but Jesus, whom ye seek, saith, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” “Fear not” death. Oh! how some do fear death, and “are all their life-time subject to bondage” by reason thereof! But Jesus, whom ye seek, hath “destroyed him that hath the power of death,” and plucked out its sting, to warrant every believer in saying, “To die is gain.”

How I do long, beloved brethren who believe in Jesus, that you should this night be set free from all harassing, servile, desponding fear! Let me exhort you, then, to take this simple caution. Act faith; act faith upon Christ. That is, not only persevere in seeking Him, by searching the Scriptures and hearing His Word, but go and plead His promises: “Hast Thou not said this or that, and caused me to hope in Thy Word? Now, then, I appeal to Thy faithfulness, I claim Thy help; let me prove the efficacy of Thy blood to pardon and to purify; let me prove the sufficiency of Thy “grace to help in time of need.” This continual exercise of faith will do more than anything to strengthen faith, and will at length enable you not only to silence unbelieving fear, but to exult and triumph, saying—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again.”

And thus we pass, in conclusion, to notice what application may be made of the tidings communicated in the text: “He is not here, for He is risen.” Little as those mourners understood this, it was in effect saying—“Your Surety is risen, your debt therefore is discharged.” And such is the application of the fact to every believer. For remember, brethren, that Christ as Mediator sustains to you a personal character; judicially, you who are one with Him—by faith are regarded as one with Him in experience; His sufferings, in their efficacy, are imputed to you, and His acquittal is your discharge. The justification of the believer passed, in the first instance, to the person of his Head; He was “justified in the Spirit;” and it is by firm and vital union with that Head, through faith, that you are counted righteous before God. Hence it is said—“He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”

Let such be the use which you make of the grand fact we this day commemorate. Regard the resurrection of Jesus not only as the type and pledge of your resurrection at the last day, but as the ground and assurance of your justification now. And “as He being dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him”—as, in other words, the life which Christ now liveth is no variable, no precarious existence, so neither is the justification which He has attained by that resurrection. It is a finished work, complete and unchangeable. Its evidence may vary—the comfort and the security derived from a consciousness of it may vary—and they will vary, brethren, in proportion to the practical use which you make of the resurrection, by “rising with Christ into newness of life,” by being “quicken together with Him,” and so “knowing the power of His resurrection” but your justification itself varies not. Let, then, the privilege animate you to the duty. Is Christ your righteousness? Let Him be your sanctification. To this end, let your attitude be still that of the text. Oh! what would I do to be able to say with certainty respecting you—“I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified!” Then, beloved brethren, come wealth or poverty, come health or sickness, come joy or sorrow, come life or death—“fear not.”

CONVERSATION.

• A Sermon,

REV. JAMES JOYCE EVANS.

(Chaplain to the Home and Colonial Training Schools.)

PREACHED IN REGENT'S SQUARE CHURCH, GRAY'S INN LANE,
ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 21, 1849.

"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Matt. xii. 34.

THERE are two great talents which God has committed to man, each a mighty instrument for good or for evil—the tongue and the pen. If used aright, they are able servants and messengers of God, to do His pleasure; if perverted, or abused, or misdirected, (as, alas! too frequently they are,) Satan hath no arrow in his deadly quiver to carry a subtler poison into men's hearts, than these two shafts from his bow—an evil tongue and a mischievous pen.

The gift of speech is a gift especially committed to man; for although other living creatures have this "little member," yet it is man alone who knows how to make use of the tongue, for the purpose of sensible speech, and in order to communicate thoughts and ideas to his fellow-men. The bird may be trained to talk; but to talk like the parrot is only to exhibit the infinite difference between the rational and the irrational creation—between the fowl of the air and him who is only "a little lower than the angels."

There is no need that I remind you of the importance of speech; its uses are too manifold, its applications too various, the gratifications bound up with it too homeborn and familiar to render such reminding necessary. Nor need the preacher attempt to awaken you to its consequence; for the tongue is its own herald, and requires no other trumpeter, to announce its presence and to secure for itself a hearing. Indeed, the powers of the tongue range over almost as wide a dominion as the powers of the brain; so that the extent of speech must needs be vast, since it is nearly commensurate with thought itself. Speech is the rudder, which steereth human affairs; speech is the spring, that setteth the wheels in motion. The hands work, the feet move—all the members and senses act by its directions, and are affected by its impulse. Scarce anything which is done at all, is done without speech. It is the hour of social intercourse—friends meet; and it is by speech they testify their mutual joy. It is market day—traders meet; and it is by speech they conclude their bargainings and effect their purchases. It is the hour of prayer—the family meet; it is by speech the master commends his household to the Lord. So that scarcely can two or three be gathered together, for any purpose whatever, without speech. Be it great or small, it mattereth not; but we may say of well-nigh everything which happeneth, in the court or in the hall, in the church or in the exchange, in the school or in the shop—it is the tongue that doeth it. It is the force of this little machine that turneth all the human world without. And as for the world within, it is by speech that we communicate our secret conceptions the one to the other—by which we transfuse the thoughts of our own bosom into the bosom of another, making him a sharer in our joys, a partner in our schemes, and the depository of our sorrows.

Oh! then, how careful should we be—careful and prayerful—that our speech should be "with grace, seasoned with salt"—that we should be "of sound speech, which cannot be condemned." As the Christian values his own peace of conscience, and desires to maintain unclouded the enjoyment of personal religion in his soul, he will resolve—"I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue."

So much for the talent of the tongue. Nor does the pen come far behind. In some points, the pen is a more powerful instrument than the tongue; it reacheth farther and spreadeth wider. The syllables of the tongue are dispersed in the air, scattered and dissipated, irrecoverably lost. Their range, too, is circumscribed. We have heard of one man making twenty thousand persons hear at once; but it was a great feat, and what few could accomplish; whereas, that which is written is permanent and enduring, and extends itself further by far, for time and place and persons, than voice can reach. The pen is an artificial tongue; it speaks as well to the absent friend, as to the present companion; it speaks to those afar off, as well as to those near at hand—not only to men of a present age, but of a future; for thus it is that Abel “being dead, yet speaketh.” And thus the pen, too, is a mighty engine for good or for evil; for the pen is a kind of image of eternity; it will make a man alive when he is dead.

But our text to-day has to do with speech: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh:” and we have here a very close connexion marked out for us—for the words which flow from the one are said to be poured out of the abundance of the other. We shall divide the matter thus:—first, examine the principle asserted in the text, that speech floweth “out of the abundance of the heart;” secondly, consider some few out of the many considerations which ought to unloose the tongue, and set it moving in the right direction; so that it may not be occupied with vain frivolities, which are the fruit of vain imaginations within; but let us consider what causes we have for seeking to glorify God with the best member we possess, and to enter into the spirit of the prayer—“O Lord, open Thou our lips, and our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.” And may He who put a word in Balaam’s mouth, put a word in mine! May God be with me, as He was with the mouth of Moses, when He sent him forth to speak among the children of his people!

In examining the truth laid down in our text, it seems advisable just to ascertain the occasion on which it was delivered. Our Lord had been referring to the difference in the punishment which followed from speaking the word against the Holy Ghost and the word against the Son of Man. The one might be forgiven—the other was the unpardonable offence. The word spoken against the Son of Man, suggested by the meanness of His exterior and the poverty of Christ’s outward appearance amongst men,—this might be forgiven; for men might ignorantly revile One in whom hereafter they might believe, when they saw that He *was* the Son of God, and might now be turning the back upon Him, whom presently they will love and follow and obey as their Lord and their God, in humble and sincere repentance. The words—“Is not this the carpenter’s son?” “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”—these might be pardoned; but to speak against the Holy Ghost was another thing. To villify His miraculous operations—to choose to impute to Satan’s power the miracle which they could not deny, rather than acknowledge the Divine agency of God the Holy Ghost in it—to attribute the miracle wrought by the Holy Spirit to the operation of the evil spirit; “Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.” And yet this was the sin of the Pharisees, as we read in the twenty-fourth verse. “All the people were amazed at the blind man seeing and the dumb man speaking; but when the Pharisees saw it they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” Such was their spleen and rage against the Gospel, they would rather suppose that the devil conspired against himself, than own the finger of God in the miracle. Now Christ meets the supposition, by showing them, first, that it is absurd and irrational—“A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation;” and secondly, Christ exposes the true character, and warns them of the consequence of such a speech, declaring that it was speaking against the Holy Ghost, which was not only blasphemy, but unpardonable blasphemy. And then, in the thirty-fourth verse, Christ appears to pause for a moment, and to make a terrible,

because a personal appeal, to his auditors. "*You are a generation of vipers; you are evil, your words must be evil: how can ye speak good things? Ye are blasphemers; no wonder your words are blasphemous—"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."* From which we draw this general principle, which we believe to be no less true than universal—that the state of the heart will regulate the conversation. There will always be, in greater or less measure, according to individual character, a sympathy and accordance, yea, even a correspondence, between the heart and the tongue. The words of the one are but the overflowings and bubblings over of the other. "*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"

The word rendered "abundance" occurs in two other passages of Scripture. In the eighth chapter of St. Mark, at the second verse, in the miracle of the seven loaves and the four thousand. When "Jesus had compassion on the multitude, because they had been with Him three days and had nothing to eat," He gave them not only enough, but more than enough; and that which was left—that excess, that which remained over and above all their consumption—is the same word as this which is here rendered "abundance." And again, in the eighth chapter of St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, at the fourteenth verse, where the apostle praises the liberality of the Macedonians towards the poor saints at Jerusalem: "I mean not," says the apostle, "that other men be eased, and ye burdened, but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want." The idea in each is superfluity, or over-abundance. So words are the excess, the redundancy, the overflowings of the heart. And therefore, when Christ said, "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,*" the heart seems to remind us of a vessel, which will hold a certain quantity without spilling, but when filled beyond its powers of containing runs over. So, when the heart of man is only slightly moved, slightly affected, there is little running over with words; it is able to contain very easily all that is poured into it, for the feelings within do not rise above the brim. But let the heart be full, the fuller it becomes the more it runs over; it is unable to contain the emotions which influence it, and the tongue moves readily. "*For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"

Now, brethren, I do not forget, in that which I have just stated, how true it often is, that words are no faithful index of what is passing within. Sometimes, (and that, too, when the heart is most full,) we know it is just the depth of the feeling which causes silence; and either it is that the struggling emotions choke the words in their utterance, or else that every expression, which at the moment is suggested to the mind, seems too trite, too common place, too hacknied, to represent what is stirring and heaving within; common, ordinary language fails to pourtray the extraordinary and almost unutterable sensations which agitate the bosom; and hence, not unfrequently, he who feels the most can (for the time at least) express nothing. Sometimes—and this is a more common case by far, and far less worthy of our sympathy—without going so far as to say, that language is given us to conceal our thoughts, yet for the sake of attaining some ends of their own, there is often a force put on the tongue, which makes speech hollow, and begets the wearisome round of a few set phrases of speech, whose outside garb of civility is scarce thick enough to conceal the emptiness within. These are but deceptive imitations, and bungling ones too, of the spontaneous outpourings of the heart. While, again, some have naturally that shyness of disposition to which reserve of speech is only congenial; and we believe we can scarcely fall into a more practical error, than to suppose that feeling lies always with him who knows how to give utterance to it, while to be silent is to be insensible. We trust we may not forget this, brethren; yet I would say of the heart which is too full to speak, when filled with the first influence of emotion—only wait a little, and words will follow. And I must believe that if the heart be deeply and abidingly imbued with the love of any object, or the importance of any subject, words will not be wanting to express it—granting only two conditions: give the opportunity

which is suitable, give the ear which is congenial, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak."

That there is a very close and intimate connexion between the heart and the tongue, I would show to you from two passages. In the second chapter of the Acts, at the twenty-sixth verse, David, speaking of a greater than himself, says—"I foresaw the Lord alway before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad." The gladness of his tongue proceeded from the rejoicing of his heart; it preceded, not only in the order of time, but in the order of cause and effect. And the other passage is in the sixth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, at the eleventh verse, where the apostle exclaims—"O ye Corinthians! our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." It was just the enlarging of the heart, which produced the opening of the mouth. And this is the very argument of our Lord in the text: "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?"—for since speech is the child of thought, the offspring after its birth will resemble the features of the parent. To conceal the fire—to check the lightning—to confine a whirlwind—may perhaps be no more difficult task, than for him who is evil in heart to restrain the evil tongue. The vain mind naturally bubbles forth in frothy expressions; the wrath which burns in the bosom will burst out in flame, or at least emit its smoke through the mouth. Pollute the fountain, and the streams can never be wholesome.

And thus, brethren, we have endeavoured to show to you, that that which flows out of the heart partakes of the same character as that within. Just as the broken fragments, which were gathered into the seven baskets, were of the same quality as the seven loaves which constituted the original repast in the miraculous feeding; just as that which runs over the sides of a vessel is of the same kind and the same quality as the remainder which the pitcher is able to contain, so words are the overflowings of the thoughts, and the desires, and the affections; they are the exuberance of a full heart. Now there are two things that follow from this. First of all, how necessary it is to remember the wise man's proverb—"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The springs of the affections, guard them well with a frequent prayer; the fountain of hopes and passions and desires, watch over it vigilantly with a holy watchfulness; for out of a heart, well kept, will flow clear streams and good issues, a sound speech and a godly conversation. Just as the heart is the fountain of the blood diffused throughout the body, so is the heart the centre of the goings forth from the mouth—the springing well of the stream of words! How much wiser and better would it be for us, if we were to keep the fountain more carefully! We might then leave the streams to themselves. This is the reason wherefore we so often transgress here—wherefore we so often speak unadvisedly with the lips; because we have forgotten to set a seal upon the fountain. Satan hath stirred up the corruptions of the heart; he has stirred up the mud at the bottom of the well, and then the issues cannot fail of being dark, and troubled, and turbid.

Our second remark is this—if, in order to secure the clearness of the streams, we must secure the cleanness of the heart, then we ought to be much in prayer, that the Holy Ghost may be poured into our hearts. I believe it has not been unfrequent to cast a solution of lime into a foul pit; and it has been found to succeed eventually in purifying the water. Brethren, we have need of a purifying infusion—a pouring into our hearts of that which will correct their natural impurity. And nothing can cleanse the heart but God the Holy Ghost. All notions concerning a sense of propriety, and regard to character, and respect for the decencies or courtesies of life—as if these were sufficient to reach a man's heart, and to correct the evil at the fountain—such notions are utterly unsound and fallacious. A respect for the opinion of the world, or even (which is a much higher motive) a respect for one's self—a man's regard for his own self-esteem,—this may qualify the streams a little; it may check certain outbreaks; we know it may close the floodgates against certain of the fouler currents which have their source in the human heart. It is not now considered gentlemanly to swear in society, nor polite to take God's name in vain openly; and we put it down to the indirect influence of Christianity that it hath raised the tone of morals in the world, and made the grosser exhibitions of profligacy to love darkness rather than the light. But after all, take the moral feeling at its highest and its purest estimate; take a regard for the opinion of another, the keenest and the most sensitive; take even the respect for our own character—that honourable pride which will not condescend to the dirty action or the word of injustice; they will not change the heart. For them, the heart is still uncleansed, and unpurified, and unconverted. Oh! we have need of the Spirit of God, to work this change in us.

He, then, that would have his words pure, must have his heart clean; and he that would have his heart new, must seek and obtain the purifying Spirit.

If the heart be filled with the Spirit, the overflowings of the heart shall be words of righteousness; for on the very same principle that the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things, so the good man out of the good treasure bringeth forth good things.

Thus, then, we have endeavoured to lay a broad, and a sound, and (we trust) a scriptural foundation for a godly speech and a conversation which edifieth. In treating the subject which has been selected for our particular contemplation this morning, I have been more anxious to deal with principles than with details; inasmuch as I believe that the conversation will order *itself* aright, if the governing principle which ought to regulate the whole machinery of words be only properly adjusted. We may borrow an illustration from the common piece of mechanism, which probably each one of you possesses. Let your watch perform badly, and how will you seek to rectify its mistakes? You will admit, it is of very little avail to be setting the hands continually to the right time. Place them aright, as soon as the error has been detected—they will need a fresh correction the next hour—yea, every hour, yea, every minute, if accuracy be cared for and the correction be possible. But what says the practical workman? He looks to the mainspring. As long as the mainspring is out of order, he knows that the true time cannot be indexed upon the face; whereas, if the mainspring be right, we may leave the hands to themselves. And even thus is it for the conversation, which is only the index of the heart, the faithful revealer of its secret workings. It is, therefore, this heart-regulation, to which we especially desire to draw your prayers; for the heart is the mainspring of all. The conversation may well be left to itself; for the words will be good or will be evil, according as the heart is moved with righteousness or with iniquity.

Peter was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts iv. 8), and the overflowings of his heart were the words which he spake to the rulers—so plain and fearless, that they marvelled at his boldness, because they perceived he was an unlearned and ignorant man. Paul was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts xii. 9), and the overflowing of his heart was the sharp and withering reproof to Elymas the sorcerer: "O full of all subtilty and mischief! thou child of the devil! thou enemy of righteousness!" which ended in the blindness of the wizard and the conversion of the deputy. Barnabas was "a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and the issue of his heart was his exhortation to the church at Antioch: "That all with one purpose of soul, would cleave unto the Lord." O God, fill our hearts with Thy Spirit, and no corrupt communications shall proceed out of our mouth.

II. And now, brethren, in conclusion, we trust that in what we have endeavoured to bring before you to-day, we have not forgotten that there are some, who feel what they would call a constitutional backwardness to speak, and who grieve, because they find it so hard to put another in possession of their thoughts, and desires within. It pains them to be silent, yet how to disengage from the chain which binds it, the passing doubt, or the rising difficulty—the first kindling of sorrow or the newly awakened joy, which is struggling in their bosoms, they do not know. More than one (now at rest, we believe, with the spirits of the just,) have often grieved, and expressed to me their sorrow, that they could not find words in which to give utterance to their feelings; and their often-repeated fear was, lest they should be thought cold, and indifferent, and uninterested, because they preferred being a listener to a talker, when even the Book of God has been before them. In every rule or precept, therefore, which we would throw out concerning speech and the exercise of the tongue, we would wish to remember that there are constitutional differences. Some are naturally reserved and shy, some open and transparent; with one the tongue is as "the pen of a ready writer,"—with another the "tongue cleaveth to the roof of the mouth." I could not surely wish to give a moment's unnecessary pain; but yet there is a time to speak, as well as a time to keep silence. The psalmist says, (Psalm xxxix. 4) "My heart was hot within me; while I was thus musing the fire kindled, and at the last I spake with my tongue." We seem almost to see the process. The heart hot—the source of heat and the centre of heat; the fire kindling—spreading, increasing—and at length the tongue speaking. The fire, which commenced within, at last bursts into a visible flame without.

Now this, brethren, is sound, philosophically and practically—true in the abstract, and true as a matter of fact. And yet I do not doubt there are some here who say, and that often—'Ah! would I had words; but when I want them most, I cannot find them.'

I shall, then, by way of winding up the subject with individual reference to ourselves, bring before you three simple reasons—three plain, yet powerful arguments—any one of which ought to unloose the tongue, and make even the naturally silent to speak.

The first is, gratitude because of mercies bestowed. I say, gratitude ought to unloose the tongue. Only let pass in review before the soul, God's conduct towards us and our conduct towards God—forbearance, patience, longsuffering, infinite on the one hand—and then place side by side with these, murmurings, discontent, despondency of heart—compare our treatment of God with God's treatment of us, and surely, if we held our peace the very stones would cry out against us. See how gratitude unlocked a woman's tongue of old; and yet she was a silent woman, too. Hannah said to Samuel—"Oh! my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." And that she was a silent woman appears from the thirteenth verse, where we read—"Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." And if we have a fresh and living apprehension of God's mercies to our souls—I do not mean now God's general mercies, but His individual mercies to me in particular—we will not be persuaded but that one naturally the most silent will be able to express that gratitude, to God first, and then I believe verily the tongue will not be dumb altogether because another is present. Hannah spake openly to Eli, as well as gave thanks to the Lord.

A regard for the soul of another ought to unloose the tongue. Indeed, we would say—It is a shame to be silent at any time, when our words may do good to another; and how powerfully ought this argument to apply when the soul is concerned! Surely, the preciousness of the immortal soul ought to open the lips. Oh! if the heart were more filled with zeal for God and love for souls, we should not find so many lets and hindrances, so many obstacles in our path and lions in our way, as too many of us find now. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." See how it unlocked Paul's tongue. "While Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him;" he was surrounded by the wise and the learned, who were also the scoffer and the idolater, and his spirit was stirred within him. The thought of souls "perishing for lack of knowledge" made him forget the philosophizing Stoic, or the more voluptuous Epicurean—forget, that is, the likelihood of their opposition; he thought only of their eternal good, he remembered only that he was a dying man, surrounded by dying creatures, with mortal bodies but immortal souls; and "out of the abundance of his heart" he spake—disputing in the synagogue, and preaching daily in the market. The love of souls, then, brethren, will unloose the tongue.

Lastly, and above all, the love of Christ will make the iron fetters yield. If the heart be truly filled with the love of Jesus, the lips will open and the mouth will speak. "We cannot but speak," said Peter and John—"we cannot *but* speak the things which we have seen and heard." There was a force laid upon them, which they could not resist; there was a constraining influence at work, which they could not overcome. Speak they must; love to their dead Master, their risen Master, their glorified Master, compelled them. Oh! for more of that love "shed abroad in our hearts"—love to a crucified Jesus—love to a great Intercessor. It is the true key to unlock the silent tongue.

The Lord give us, dear brethren, wisdom, that we may know when to speak, and when to refrain! While we remember, "the fool is known by his lips," may we not forget that it is the very characteristic of those that fear the Lord, that they "speak often one to another;" and that when they speak the Lord hearkens and the Lord hears.

THE HEAD STONE OF THE CORNER.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, PADDINGTON,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 15, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Scripture Readers' Association.

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."—Psalm cxviii. 22—24.

THERE are scenes and occurrences which fill us with amazement and awe, but which scarcely excite any pleasurable emotions, because we have no direct personal interest in what is beheld or recorded. If, for example, you read the account of a hard-fought battle, the contending parties being wholly unconnected with you, you may admire the heroism displayed, as perhaps a small band of patriots beats back an invading host from their country's shores: but what a different thing must the account become, when in those patriots you recognise your own defenders, and read in their victory your own deliverance! There is much the same to be said, in regard of a magnificent landscape, viewed in a country where we feel ourselves foreigners. It is a noble scene, and awakens some of the loftiest emotions of our nature, when we gaze on one of those glorious spreadings of scenery which include the mountain and the valley, the forest and the river, and perhaps far away in the distance the sparkling ocean, suggesting a thought on the countries which lie beyond—so that the mind overlooks the already vast spectacle, and creates a panorama of the world; but nevertheless there is a feeling of apathy, for in all that bright landscape there may not be a spot with which our hearts have any close association. And how it alters the whole aspect of the scenery, when the eye can single out our own home from all the glory and all the vastness, and descry from the eminence which commands the splendid combination one sacred spot, where are hearts which beat kindly towards us, and are answered by our own!

Now let us apply these remarks to our text. The psalmist makes an assertion as to a remarkable change in the condition of some person, (for the language is evidently typical,) whom he designates under the figure of a stone. This stone had passed from the being utterly despised, to the being selected for the most important place in some magnificent structure. As the psalmist contemplates this fact, the first excited feeling is that of amazement or admiration—just as might be evidenced in the supposed case of perusing the Gazette or surveying the landscape: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." But then he straightway thinks of his own personal interest in the surprising event—just as we might observe that our own fortunes hung on the registered battle, or our own dwelling lay in the vast panorama. Hence the language of exultation mingles with that of wonder—"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Come, then, as you would to a history or a scene in which, whilst you knew that you were to meet with something vast and overwhelming, you knew also that you might expect cause for gladness and rejoicing. We must endeavour to determine, in the first place, what that event or fact is, which David describes by the rejected stone becoming "the head of the corner;" we must then, in the second place, examine the fitness of his several exclamations;—the one indicating amazement—"it is marvellous in our eyes;" the other indicating delight—"we will rejoice and be glad in it."

I. Now there can be no debate, that it is our Lord Jesus Christ whom David here designates as "the stone which the builders refused." St. Peter, when

summoned before the rulers, on account of the miracle wrought upon the impotent man, boldly declared that the cure had been effected "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," and added, "This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." You know that the imagery is of frequent use in Scripture, which describes Christ as a Stone. The fitness of such a description is so easily apprehended, that it were superfluous to dwell long on its exposition. The firmness and solidity which are common in a stone, render it eminently a suitable figure of that Mediator who was to be of strength enough to bear up a world, so that sinners of every age might build on Him and be safe for eternity. And this Stone, "chosen of God and precious," appointed for a rock on which a new creation might rise, was rejected by the builders; for Christ "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The metaphor, you observe, is carefully preserved. If Christ is represented as a Stone, the chief priests and scribes are represented as builders—the parties with whom rests the making use of the stone, and giving it its appropriate place in the structure on which they were engaged. The Jews were emphatically the builders; "unto them were committed the oracles of God," with them it rested to keep up a knowledge of God in the world, to preserve a hope of deliverance, and to gather from surrounding nations converts, who might enlarge the house of the Lord. They might have been builders beneath whose operation should have risen one vast moral temple; for had they but acknowledged Jesus as their King, instead of haughtily refusing to have Him to reign over them, we may not doubt that they and the Gentiles would have been rapidly incorporated in the one magnificent structure, whose walls should have been salvation and whose gates praise. But these builders rejected the Stone, and treated it with loathing and disdain. The builders themselves—men whose business it was to examine, as well as use stones—the builders set Christ at nought. Those who had the oracles of God would not own Him as the everlasting Word; those in whose hands lay the records of prophecy would not confess Him, as witnessed to by holy men of old; His very countrymen, in whose streets He taught and before whose eyes He wrought wonders, shouted, "Away with Him, away with Him; not this Man, but Barabbas."

We need not dwell on the fact that the Stone was rejected; we need not lay before you the fearfulness and vehemence and malignity of the rejection. The solemnities of Good Friday must be yet in your recollection; and we will not again take you to the appalling scenes, where "He who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," "poured out His soul unto death," amidst the execrations of those whom He died to redeem. But there was a mightier Builder than the chief priests and Pharisees. If they rejected the Stone, the great Architect interfered, raised it from the pit into which it was cast, and assigned it its true place in the structure. The rejection of the Stone was consummated by the crucifixion of Christ. This was not only the refusing to employ it in the temple, but the endeavouring to grind it into powder, that henceforward it might be utterly useless. O foolish and wicked builders! ye knew not that the very act by which you thought to cast the Stone out for ever from the temple, would but advance it to the most important and conspicuous of places. Yet thus it was: the death of the Redeemer completed the work of our redemption; it exhausted the curse, it left no sin without its expiation, and there remained nothing but that God should bring again from the dead "the great Shepherd of the sheep," invest Him with all power, and place Him at His right hand as our Intercessor and Advocate.

And this is figuratively described as the making the rejected Stone "the head Stone of the corner." The corner is the place where two walls meet, and the corner stone is that by which they are connected or combined. Hence the idea suggested by a corner stone is mainly that of union; and it is as uniting what was separated or detached, that Christ is specially presented to us under such a name. And verily He was the Corner Stone. In His person were combined the Divine nature and the human; and it was this combina-

tion, His being the Corner Stone between God and man, which alone fitted Him for the vast office He had undertaken to discharge. Did He not, moreover, unite Jew and Gentile, making both one, by removing all ceremonial distinctions, and founding a church which should open its gates to every nation under heaven? Nay, did He not unite God and man in another sense by becoming in His own person a Corner Stone? He reconciled the world to its Maker—He restored harmony where sin had wrought a fearful separation. Yes, He was, and He is, the Corner Stone between earth and heaven. This guilty world, alienated through transgression from what is lofty and undefiled in the universe, has been placed by the mediation of Christ in communion with other worlds and other orders of being; angels, visiting and ministering spirits, waiting on its inhabitants; and its inhabitants even now privileged to have access to celestial places, and assured that if they die believers in Jesus, they shall pass into the immediate presence of the Almighty. Without inquiring the effect which Christ's mediation may have had on other orders of being, it is certain that He has served as a Corner Stone in regard to ourselves. Nation with nation, man with God, earth with heaven—the connection is altogether through Christ; so that Christ is the link, the bond, the cause, the principle of combination. What but Christianity will ever make one family of the whole earth? But diffuse Christianity, and you diffuse brotherhood; distant regions are connected, and those who never meet in the flesh are one in the spirit. Man is a rebel; a sentence has gone out against him; God has withdrawn Himself from him; but in Christ Jesus “they who were sometime afar off are made nigh,” and the Father is ready to fall on the neck of the prodigal child. On the earth, as on a deformed and polluted province, rested the malediction of our Maker; its glory was quenched, for God could hold no intercourse with it, save by a ministry of vengeance; but there is now a high road between earth and heaven—Christ “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;” and we expect the time—expect it confidently, for we have the sure word of prophecy for it—when new heavens and a new earth shall take the place of the old—when “the holy city, new Jerusalem,” shall come down from God out of heaven, and a voice shall be heard—“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them.” Look, then, if you will, to man in his ruinous state, and call him separated from God, a sullen dislocated thing, himself an alien and the world in which he dwells a wandering star; but look also on another scene—behold man reconciled to God, behold every cause of enmity destroyed, behold myriads of fallen creatures renewed in the Divine image, and all through the energies of the one work of mediation, and then see if you can withhold the confession, that the “Stone which the builders refused is become the Head Stone of the corner.”

II. Such, then, if we may refer to our introductory observations, is the gazette on which you have to ponder, the scene on which you have to look: the gazette, of a battle in which One who appeared in human form “triumphed over principalities and powers, making a show of them openly”—the scene one of universal order, purity and happiness, succeeding to one of confusion, impurity, and wretchedness. The feelings of the psalmist, as you gather from our text, were those of amazement and delight; and it becomes us to consider whether there be not cause for both—for our exclaiming, “it is marvellous in our eyes,” but equally for our adding, “we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

It is evident, from the manner in which St. Peter quotes the prophecy in our text, that such prophecy had especial reference to the resurrection of Christ. It was by and through the resurrection that the rejected Stone was exalted to the head of the corner; and forasmuch as the alleged marvel lies evidently in the transition from the rejection to the exaltation, we are bound to conclude that the process through which the transition took place had much to do with the wonder expressed by the psalmist. And never ought the resurrection of the Redeemer to appear to us other than a fact as amazing as it is stupendous; for there is, as you all know, a respect in which the resur-

rection of Christ differs immeasurably from every other recorded case of the quickening of the dead. Others were raised by Christ, or by men acting in the name and with the authority of Christ; but Christ raised Himself. He rose from the grave—rose by His own act. “Destroy this temple,” said He, “and in three days I will raise it up;” the evangelist adding, as a comment, “He spake of the temple of His body.” When our blessed Lord took human nature into union with the Divine, the union was such as was never to be dissolved—no, not even through the death upon the cross. Through this death the soul was separated from the body, but Divinity was separated from neither; the body in the grave and the soul in the separate state, were each as much united with Godhead in the Divine person of Christ, as when themselves joined in the living Son of the Virgin. There was nothing in the detachment of the one from the other to break the union of either with Deity, for Deity is limited to no place, and was not, therefore, less one with the body, as it lay in the sepulchre, because one also with the soul which had entered the paradise. And forasmuch as it was thus a Divine person which was buried, it required no power beyond that which the Buried itself possessed, to burst the grave and reappear amongst the living. There is no exaggeration in saying, though we confess it almost looks like contradiction, that the dead person, because a Divine person, had power to quicken Himself. And the power was exerted. Scripture ascribes the resurrection of Christ in some places to Christ Himself, in others to the Father; so that we have the same right to declare that the dead person rose from the grave, as that the dead person was raised from the grave, though the first expression ascribes the quickening energy to the dead person Himself, whilst the second refers it to some external but Omnipotent agency. The Stone, rejected as it had been, and thrown by the builders with the dead, stirred of itself in its gloomy receptacle, instinct with life forced back whatever opposed its return, and sprang to its true place in the temple of God. But is this less wonderful, because we can find this reason, or explanation, in the indissolubleness of the union between the Divinity and the humanity in the person of Christ? Nay, whatever shows this indissolubleness is itself a new reason for admiration and amazement. The marvel of marvels—that which we believe will not cease to be marvellous when eternity has been given to its contemplation—is that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us;” but the marvel seems immeasurably heightened, when the dead Christ, as well as the living, may be identified as actually a Person of the Godhead. Divinity in the grave!—this is a stupendous thing. But Divinity was in the grave—Divinity was proved to have been in the grave, when the rejected Stone, by the exercise of its own power, came forth from the grave. Verily, we must exclaim with the psalmist—“This is the Lord’s doing.”

The resurrection of Christ, effected through His own power, supersedes all necessity for any other miracle in evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity. How could that Being be less than Deity itself, who even when dead in human nature was mighty enough to quicken that nature—who, by a strangeness of combination must have been dead and alive at once, and who was able, in that respect in which He was alive, to reanimate Himself in that respect in which He was dead? Need we ask whether this excites your amazement? We have supposed that wonder might be raised, by the record of a battle or the survey of a landscape. I know there is not one of you, who would not thrill at the strangeness of the tidings, if told that the champion of some mighty cause, in the day when that cause was at stake, had been beaten down by the enemy and left for dead upon the field, and then rising suddenly up, as though reanimated from above, rallied his scattered forces, and poured them like an overwhelming torrent upon the foe. But what would this be, to what is now actually presented? No champion left for dead, but One literally dead, One literally buried, starts from the ground, mightier for having died—breaks as He rises the chains of the whole human race, and defeats, by the mere force

of His reappearance, all the powers and all the principalities of evil. Or, to take the other illustration : I know that you would gaze with awe and admiration on one of nature's vast panoramas, as there passed over the chequered scene the changes that are wrought by the alternations of sunshine and of storm—the huge mass frowning at one moment like an angry giant waiting to destroy, and at another becoming radiant with light—the mighty forests now rocking to and fro like a troubled sea, and now hushing into calm. But if this excite awe and amazement, what shall be done by transitions and changes far more extensive ? Our landscape is the world ; a storm passes over it ; the sun is darkened in the midst of the heavens ; the rocks are rent ;—but immediately after, the Stone whose rejection gave occasion to all these convulsions of nature, is made “the Head Stone of the corner ;” and lo ! glorious beings are building the temple ; the world is a delivered world ; “the floods clap their hands, the fields are joyful, and all the trees of the wood rejoice.” Oh ! which of you, when he thinks how, in rising from the dead, the Redeemer destroyed the curse and provided that “the creature itself also should be delivered from the bondage of corruption”—which of you can refuse to join in the exclamation—“This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes ?”

But amazement, or admiration, is not the only feeling which the fact before us should excite. The battle, the narrative of which is so surprising, was fought in our behalf, and the landscape, which awakens such lofty emotions, includes within its sweep whatever is most precious to ourselves. “This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” The resurrection of Christ completed our redemption, or was the testimony which God gave of the acceptance of our Surety. It was only when He was discharged from the grave without seeing corruption, that evidence was furnished of the prevalence of the vicarious sacrifice—of its having removed human guilt, and wrought out our reconciliation to an offended Creator. A Redeemer detained in the grave, would have necessarily been a Redeemer unable to redeem ; a stone not exalted to “the head of the corner,” would have been one which failed to combine earth and heaven. The resurrection of Christ, therefore, is no barren fact—a fact which may be proved without advantage, or disproved without serious loss ; our redemption hinges on this fact ; the deserted grave is to us the opened heaven—the occupied grave the inevitable hell. Thus, there is not a reason for our rejoicing in the being redeemed, which is not also a reason for our rejoicing in Christ's being raised. “This is the day which the Lord hath made.” There was no day before ; it was not day to an apostate and darkened creation, till the Sun of righteousness rose on it in His strength ; and His rising was virtually the rising from the dead. We, then, who can rejoice, because there hath arisen a Mediator between us and God, must therefore rejoice in the exaltation of the rejected Stone. It was in the rising to “the Head of the corner,” that this Stone swept down the obstacles to the forgiveness of man, and opened to him the pathway of life and immortality.

And there is more to be said than this. The resurrection of our own bodies is intimately connected with the resurrection of Christ—connected, as an effect with a cause ; “for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead : for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Therefore, if it be any cause for joy that our bodies are to rise, it is cause for joy that the Stone rejected by the builders was exalted of God to “the head of the corner.” And the resurrection of the body is a cause for joy. God, indeed, might make the soul happy, though the body remained in the dust ; but this could only be by altering the nature of the soul, giving her other organs, and endowing her with new powers. The object of the second Adam was to restore man to the perfection from which he was withdrawn by the curse ; but it would be hard to say that this object could be accomplished, if human nature were to be finally changed—changed from the compound to the simple, from the consisting of matter and spirit to the being spirit alone. It follows, therefore, that the doctrine of the resurrection is abso-

lately indispensable to any rational hope of future felicity. Indeed, it is indispensable to the truth of a general judgment; for a general judgment there cannot be, on any such principles as those on which the Divine government must rest, unless the parties brought to the bar are the very same parties as were here upon probation; and the very same parties they unquestionably are not, if they only be fractions of their former selves, souls without bodies, the mere shreds or halves of what they were. And as there could be no general judgment without the resurrection, neither could the soul, so far as we are acquainted with her capacities, attain any such happiness as she might have, if shrouded again in the body. It may, indeed, sound like a high degree of spirituality to wish for abstraction from matter—to regard the body as nothing but the clog, disencumbered of which the soul would stretch her wings and soar through regions of universal truth; but I, for one, have no fellowship with this transcendental piety. I cannot necessarily associate what is sinful with what is material; I cannot regard the body as necessarily a clog upon the soul, when I behold the Redeemer carrying into heavenly places that very structure of bone and of flesh in which He tabernacled upon earth and was nailed upon the cross. What is material may be polluted, what is corporeal depraved; but I do not therefore associate my happiness with the removal of the material, nor my perfection with the destruction of the corporeal: I look for the regeneration of the material, for the purification of the corporeal; I “look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”—for a glorified soul in a glorified body—the body the instrument, as well as the auxiliary to the soul, in gathering in the magnificent harvest of truth, studying the perfections and executing the will of the universal King. The resurrection is, therefore, an indispensable element in all our pictures of the future. Without it I am a dismembered, widowed thing; my hereafter is but vacancy, forasmuch as I am not qualified for any future state of being in which the spirit is to act in the absence of matter; but with it I am heir of a splendid inheritance. The street of gold and the gate of pearl are not mere figures. Man is to have body, as well as soul, in eternity, and his dwelling-place is to be suitable to him, as being compounded of matter and of spirit. The body, indeed, is to be a spiritual body, and therefore will renovated materialism assume a more spiritual character, congenial to that of the celestial inhabitants; but a material system there surely shall be—a material world, with material loveliness, and an overarching sky, in which, when the present constellations shall be quenched, their places shall be filled with others, more beautifully, more eloquently bright.

If such, then, be the resurrection, and such our personal interest in the rising of the rejected Stone to be “the Head of the corner,” it is not amazement only with which you will hear the record or look upon the landscape. The record is that of a stupendous victory, but a victory which secured you the means of grace and the hope of glory. The landscape is one of unrivalled magnificence—it is that of creation purified from every stain, and glowing with richer beauty than sparkled in Paradise, when the world’s age was reckoned by days; but you have a home in that landscape; the “many mansions” in your Father’s house are there, and the risen Christ is showing you where you shall dwell. Oh! then, delight must be added to amazement. If you have already exclaimed with a tongue of wonder, “This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes,” will you not now add with a tongue of exultation, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it?”

Now there can be no difficulty in applying this great subject of discourse to the important cause which I have undertaken to advocate. Whoever finds in the scheme of our redemption matter for admiring wonder—whoever finds in it matter for delighted thankfulness—will necessarily desire to spread the knowledge of that scheme, that others, too, may admire—that others, too, may rejoice. And if it be our honest desire that that Stone, so ignominiously rejected, so mysteriously exalted, should serve as a corner stone, uniting into one the scattered tribes of our race, oh! then, we

shall earnestly strive to strengthen the hands of the one catholic and apostolic church, God's appointed instrument for the diffusion of the Gospel. Alas ! that practically this should have been lost sight of for so many years ; our parishes having been suffered to multiply their population from tens to hundreds, from hundreds to thousands, without any attempt to make the amount of pastoral superintendence keep pace with the augmented and ever-growing demand. And now we reap the bitter fruits of our negligence. The population having vastly outstripped the means of religious instruction, there are crowded into the courts and alleys of our cities hordes of human beings, who, void of all fear and all knowledge of God, can be viewed only with dread and apprehension by those who would uphold order and property in the land, and with bitter grief and compassion by those who know it to be written where no falsehood is inscribed, " The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." Can we do nothing in this emergency ? Can we in no measure grapple with the ignorance and the misery of our overgrown parishes ? Yes ; enlarge, multiply, strengthen the agency of the church, through which (as we have said) God ordinarily operates for the moral renewal of the world. And the Society for which I now plead works directly at increasing the efficiency of the church, Admitting readily that nothing can supply the place of the ordained clergy, and that our grand effort should be given to the multiplying churches and pastors, it yet feels that much may be done by Scripture Readers, pious and zealous laymen, who under the superintendence of the clergy shall move about among the houses of the poor, and carry in simplicity and sincerity the blessed truths of the Bible to the ignorant and the depraved. Oh ! such men may be wonderful auxiliaries to the clergymen, in dealing with a large and a dissolute parish. They prepare the way for him ; they call him in where his presence is most needed ; they inform him of the sick and the dying. Ay, and many a rugged heart may be softened, by the touching, thrilling tidings, that Christ died upon the cross, read in earnestness and affection by one who, poor himself and with little appearance of superiority in station, is likely to be welcomed by the poor, especially, as understanding their tastes and sympathising with their wants.

You will not, then—you cannot refuse to aid such a Society. It would be the refusing to aid in carrying to thousands of the most degraded and wretched of our fellow-creatures the great remedy for all social disorders, the antidote to all ills, the guide to a blessed immortality. I have every confidence in the power of the Bible to make its way among a depraved and neglected population. I believe that a great thing is done, and that great good may be wrought, if a man stand up in the midst of a dissolute family, and read the glorious, the wonderful announcement—" God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is an announcement which speaks for itself ; the Spirit of the living God will often take it, will strike with it upon the conscience and lodge it in the heart of the most hardened transgressor. Oh ! then, let us be energetic in bringing the Bible, the simple, unadulterated Bible, into direct contact with the mass of ignorance and vice by which we are surrounded. Thus may we be effecting a great moral regeneration ; thus may we be instrumental to the diminishing human wretchedness, to the augmenting national prosperity, to the rekindling the almost quenched immortality. Marvellous is the change which the religion of Christ is calculated to produce : order succeeds to confusion, peace to discord, contentment to murmuring, life to death. Oh ! who could look on it, and not say, with the voice of amazement, " This is the Lord's doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes ?" But if we ourselves, by our efforts to make Christ known to the perishing—if we ourselves have borne part in effecting so wondrous a revolution—if we ourselves have spread some rays of that light which is gilding the darkness and making the present and the future bright with strange lustre,—then will it not be with a tongue of rapture and delight that we add, " This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it ?"

THE WORK OF GRACE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN REGENT'S SQUARE CHURCH, GRAY'S INN ROAD,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 15, 1849.

Before making a Collection on behalf of the Church of England Metropolitan Training Institution.

"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."—James i. 18.

THE institution on whose behalf I have to address you this morning, is in its infancy. It may be proper, therefore, that I should here state its object. It is thus briefly described in the printed circular issued by the provisional committee:—"to train pious persons, upon scriptural, evangelical, and Protestant principles, as masters and mistresses, for juvenile schools connected with the Established Church." To accomplish this object in such a manner as to meet the requirements exacted, and so as to participate in the encouragement held forth by the government, it is necessary that the work should be done on a scale of considerable magnitude. The present appeal, therefore, cannot be adequately responded to by the ordinary amount of donations, or by such support as might be sufficient to maintain an institution which was already established. A special effort is demanded at the outset, in order that all preliminary difficulties may be overcome, and stability given to what becomes every year—I might without exaggeration say every hour—of more importance to the best interests of the country. We have confidence in the power of scriptural truth when brought to bear upon the human mind, believing that it can and does do what nothing else can do. It can accomplish what no legislation of man, whether conciliatory or coercive, can ever effect. It can subdue the pride of scepticism, subordinate the knowledge of things natural to the faith of things supernatural, and make the accomplished intellectual giant amongst men a consistent, humble, and modest little child in the presence of God; it can emancipate from the slavery of superstition, dissipate the corrupt and corrupting traditions of men, and rescue the subjects of a Christian sovereign from the disloyalty of a divided allegiance.

There is no element of strength more vital to a man, to a church, or to a nation, than confidence in the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures. I have selected a text adapted to the cultivation of that confidence. It contains a brief, but comprehensive description of the work of God's grace amongst men: first, in the origin of it—"Of His own will;" secondly, in the nature of it—"begat He us;" thirdly, in the instrument of it—"the Word of Truth;" and, lastly, in the position at present occupied by the church relatively to the rest of the world—"that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

I. We are, then, to consider, first, the work of God's grace among men in its origin. This is ascribed to the absolute will of God. "Of His own will." Thus we are invited to consider the sovereignty of God: a high theme, which is frequently found in the writings of prophets and apostles. Writers inspired by the Holy Ghost seem to delight in this theme. They magnify the Lord as a God of power to do what He will without control, and of right to do what He will without injustice. Has He not a right to do what He will with His own? and are not all things His own? Is He not absolute, uncontrolled, and sovereign, upholding all things at every moment, managing all creatures

infallibly, from the hosts of angels that surround His throne down to the smallest particle of inanimate matter? Men talk of "the laws of nature," and if it be rightly understood, we need not object to that phrase. But let it be rightly understood. There can be no laws without a law-maker; there can be no administration of laws without a constant, living executive. Who, then, made, and who constantly executes, the laws of nature? Gravitation, attraction, cohesion, the pressure of the atmosphere, the expansion of steam—what are these and all their kindred agencies but the constant personal agency of God in what we call the natural world? Uniform, indeed, they are, but that arises from His perfection. They are not the result of experiments made in order to attain perfection. The first time that God did anything He did it in the best way: He would not do it worse and He could not do it better; therefore He always does it in the best way. These agencies are, then, to be depended on as regards uniformity. But they are not less the agencies of a living, present, acting Being. So it is also in the affairs of men. The reigns of kings and queens; the rise and fall of dynasties; the deliberations of senates; the levying of armies; the manning of fleets; the rivalry of parties—what, again, are all these but the constant agency of God in what we call the political world? Men are as thoroughly under His power as matter, though not in the same way. It were to limit His power to say that He can only manage matter and must leave mind to itself. He manages mind in all its liberty as infallibly as He does matter in all its inertness. There never was an action more freely performed by men upon the face of this earth than was the crucifixion of Christ; yet it was foreordained of God before the creation of the world. "Of His own will," then, all these things come to pass. And so is it, too, in the smaller matters of private life. Health, sickness, wealth, poverty, happy homes or bitter afflictions, these are all under the sovereign arrangement of God, and according to "His own will." So, again, in the matter referred to in the text—the changing of the minds and hearts of fallen men—one is taken, and another left, according to God's will. "Many are called and few are chosen:" "of His own will." Is there danger in this high truth? Undoubtedly. There is danger to fallen man in every truth, arising not from the truth itself, but from the perverseness with which it is treated. Man, living to himself, either neglects or abuses truth, so that it becomes "a savour of death unto death." To say, then, that there is danger in truth, is to say nothing against the truth. Is there difficulty connected with the truth of which I have been speaking? Undoubtedly there is. Why should there not be? Does it reveal anything of God? Then it inevitably involves a difficulty. With a finite understanding either there must be absolute ignorance of God, or difficulty must be involved where the understanding fails. The slightest glimpse of God involves man in a horizon of knowledge. The extent of the horizon may vary a little between man and man; but to the highest created intellect there must still be a horizon, and in the horizon difficulty; and if that which presents the difficulty now were cleared away by some greater truth being exhibited at a greater distance, that new revelation would but occupy the place of the present one, and still leave a horizon to created intellect to all eternity. We do not pretend, then, to divest the truth of difficulty, in asking man to submit his intellect, as well as his will, to the majesty of God.

Is there practical perplexity in the truth before us? Yes, there is, through the perverseness of man, who is ready to take advantage of any imaginary excuse for himself, and to throw the blame of his own sin upon God's sovereignty. But "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." There is the pedigree of everlasting death, which man is charged with bringing upon himself. But does it follow, that as man is the author of this evil, he may originate good? "Do not err, my

beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us." It is thus, then, that the apostle treats this subject. He declares, but explains not.

II. And thus from considering the origin of this work we are led, in the second place, to consider the nature of it. "Begot He us." The phrase is figurative, and we may truly add that the figure is very expressive. It describes a great moral change; a change as complete as that which takes place physically in the state of an infant between the period before and the period after its birth. All things have become new. The element in which it lives is new; the mode in which life is communicated is new. And so it is here. The expression used signifies something more than a change occasioned by education or habit, by any moral persuasion of our fellow creatures. It implies something vastly deeper than this; it describes an influence which can change a man who has grown old in bad habits, and make him a new creature without any education at all. There is a direct exercise of God's power upon the man's spirit,—an immediate agency of the Holy Ghost operating on his mind. Therefore it is that we say "you must be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Man propagates his likeness, but man born again is brought into the likeness of God. This is something very different from the enjoyment of any ecclesiastical privileges, from belonging to, or dissenting from, any church; it is something very different from receiving or rejecting any particular doctrine. Of course we throw no despite whatever upon sound doctrine or upon scriptural order. These things are good in their place, but they are distinct from the change now under consideration. The change here spoken of by the apostle, and which is, as you are aware, frequently referred to throughout the Scriptures, is an inward and spiritual change in the habits and instincts of man. It is not the effect of moral suasion or education, or of outward circumstances; it is not produced by the fear of consequences, or by the love of approbation amongst men, or by any of the thousand motives which actuate men in society, but it is wrought by the immediate agency of God upon the spirit of man, without which no man of the race of Adam can be pure or happy. We are all so thoroughly estranged from Him, so thoroughly taken up with creatures to the practical neglect of Him, and when we are compelled to think of Him we think of Him so unworthily and so selfishly, that without this change no man living can have worthy notions of God, or be happy even if admitted into His presence. Now how simply this accounts for the facts of the case as discovered when you look around you in the world! The unconverted men of this world are, as touching God and the things of God, like a man in a deep sleep as touching the things of the world around him. Imagine a man in a deep sleep; dreaming, possibly speaking in his dream; attentive to the visions of the mind on his bed, but quite unconscious of all that is going on around him. His house takes fire, but he knows nothing of it; he is asleep. The fire gains upon a part of the house which is distant from him; some of his children, perhaps, are burnt; but he knows nothing of it, he is still asleep. The fire approaches his own chamber; his wife, lying by his side, convulsed with terror, expires from suffocation; still he is asleep. The fire, however, at length reaches his own person. Now the spell is broken! he starts into sudden consciousness of what has been taking place. But it is too late: the house, the room, the bed, all are gone, and he sinks amid the ruin. Here is a history, in very few words, of the mass of mankind, as touching the things of God. They are dreaming busily of the affairs of this world; money, pleasure, ambition—these are the visions of their minds, and in the affairs of God they feel no more concern than the sleeping man in the state of his house. The hand of God is stretched out. Some of their enjoyments are cut off; some of their friends taken from them; their children are, it may be, snatched away and laid in an early grave, or a wife removed from their sight. Still the unconverted man dreams on, and he continues dreaming, until the

Word of God touches himself. Then it is too late, and he sinks into a ruined eternity. Now this sounds very sad, but it is common, and in the course of the world there is nothing peculiar about it. It is, in a few words, I repeat, the history of the mass of mankind, the mass of the community, around—I trust in God I could not add truly the majority of yourselves; yet I cannot doubt that there are many in this congregation who are still in that position, and to whom God is saying, ‘Arise, ye that sleep; awake, and Christ shall give you light.’ You must be born again, or else be ruined. I know that it is of God’s sovereign will that the new birth is brought about; but He constantly uses means, and I am now using the mean which He has appointed for this end, namely, the Word of truth.

III. Thus we arrive at the next point for consideration, namely, the instrument by which this great change is produced in man. It is wrought, not by any charm, but by the secret power of God, using a suitable instrument for the purpose.

“The Word of truth” is God’s instrument, and it is suitable for the purpose of acting on the moral constitution of man. I have already said that God acts as absolutely upon mind in all its liberty as upon matter in all its inertness. The mode of acting, indeed, must be different in the two cases. The mode of acting in the case under consideration must be as suitable to mind, as gravitation, and other agencies of the same kind, are suitable to matter. The great change of which we speak, and without which no man can be saved, is carried on by means of the Word of God. “Hear,” says the prophet, “and your souls shall live.” “Faith,” says the apostle, “cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” The work, in virtue of which this change takes place—the work of Christ—is done. There are no more such works to be done. There is no atoning blood to be shed in addition to what has been shed; there is no justifying righteousness to be wrought in addition to what has been wrought. All that was necessary has been done; the Word of God proclaims it as done. And the Word of God further addresses itself to man as requiring this finished work. It addresses itself to him in the condition in which he is found as a fallen creature. It comes to him with light for his understanding, and with love for his affections. These are precisely what he requires; light in his understanding to rescue him from false estimates of things, love in his heart to deliver him from idolatry—the idolatry of creatures. Thus we discover the suitability of the instrument provided by God. Man’s understanding is so darkened, that he is constantly making false estimates. One grand item is constantly left out of his calculations; and you know, that if any item be improperly left out of a calculation, the result must inevitably be erroneous. The grand item which is omitted in all the calculations of man, is eternity. He makes calculations in which are included the things of this world only. I do not say that he takes into account only the brief space during which he himself will be in the world. Many worldly men have a posthumous ambition, and desire to benefit society, present and future. Still their views are confined to this world, and the things of this world, either in the present generation or in the persons of children and children’s children. Improvement in political and social institutions, advances in civilisation, and the amelioration of the condition of the various classes of society, occupy man’s attention; and his calculations, so far as these things are concerned, are often most accurate and valuable. Still the grand item is omitted. When society shall be reaping the benefit of such designs, in the persons of children and children’s children, the fathers and the grandfathers, where are they? Eternity was not in their plans. They planned for the advantage of posterity, and posterity have obtained the benefit. But they planned nothing for their own salvation; and where are they? What did they value most? Let their history speak. Compare the interest which they took in the work for which Christ died, with that which they felt in a contested election. There is more money spent in this kingdom in one general election, than by all the societies for the propagation of the truth of

God, collectively, in the course of a twelvemonth. They showed clearly where their chief interest lay. They exhibited more anxiety about an essay on a steam engine than about an essay on justification by faith; they considered their time and their money better spent in hearkening to a lecture on the instincts of one of the lower creatures—a bird or an insect—than a lecture on the fruits of the Spirit, or on the difference between Christ and antichrist. Now this is the state in which the Word of God finds man. Fallen man cannot make right estimates; he cannot, from the very nature of his position, take eternity into account, in the way that is necessary. He has no spiritual perception. He forms his estimates upon the materials in his mind; but he has no spiritual discernment, and therefore he cannot give adequate weight to the things of eternity. He resembles children whom we see amusing themselves with tinsel on the cover of a book, to which they attach far more value than to the contents. But while the experience of the man may rectify the mistakes of the child, nothing but the light of the Gospel can rectify the mistakes of the man. The Word of God received in the heart rectifies man's mistakes. It is of vital importance that this should be not merely known, but felt. Suppose the case of an artist accomplished in all that belongs to external decoration, to colour, figure, proportion, and elevation: suppose him further to be deaf; and suppose this deaf artist to be employed by some friends to choose for them an organ. So far as the organ case is concerned, he is perfectly competent to make the choice and to judge of the requisite aspect, proportions, decorations, and elevation. If what his friends wanted were merely a beautiful and silent piece of furniture, he would be most competent to execute their commission. But what they want is an organ, and the chief point for consideration in an organ is sound; for without full, sweet, and harmonious sounds, the most beautiful organ case would be nothing but deception. Now our deaf artist cannot hear sound; and what can be the result of his choice of an organ? who can depend upon his judgment? I grant him qualified in every other respect, but not in the chief one. Now the interpretation of the parable is this. The organ represents the whole existence of man; the decorations of the case represent all that belongs to his comfort, accommodation, and improvement in this world; and the sound is eternity. The deaf artist is the unconverted philosopher. Let this philosopher be as accomplished as he may in everything else, he is deaf to the sounds of heaven and hell; and all his estimates are vitiated because he constantly omits the grand peculiarity, the chief item in a right computation. But now the Word of God brings light to this man. By the Word of truth a right estimate is presented to his mind; he sees there the difference which God has made between the things of this world, and the things which belong to salvation; he sees there, that while God has allowed man, by the exercise of his own reason, by the progress of his own light and learning, to make one discovery after another, and gradually to improve the affairs of this world, He has not left him to discover and improve religion. God has thought religion of sufficient consequence to be revealed perfect from heaven, while He has thought the occupations of mankind of such little importance, that He has left men to discover and to improve at their leisure. Here is the grand feature, then, in the estimate of God. When, by the secret power of the grace of God, the Word enters a man's mind, it pours in a flood of light upon his understanding, showing him his true and proper place in society here, and the higher and paramount importance of salvation hereafter. This is light. By this means the Word, as a suitable instrument, rectifies man's mind.

And so it is with his heart and his affections. The heart of man is naturally so estranged from God, that he is perpetually setting up idols to himself in the world. Beauty, wit, wealth, domestic enjoyments, the endearments of social life, literary and scientific attainments, these are his pride, and are worshipped by him with a practical and intense idolatry; and although idol after idol be broken, and heart after heart be made to ache; although

disappointment follow disappointment, and the helpless votaries of the things of time are compelled to sigh forth in sorrow—"Who will show us any good?" still the treacherous heart sets up some other idol, betakes itself to some other "broken vessel which can hold no water." The affections of men must lean on something. They resemble those parasitical plants which cannot stand upright alone. The ivy clasps the oak; the jessamine and the honeysuckle cleave to the trellis work, and in like manner man must cleave to something. The enjoyments of the world, the objects of ambition—literary power or worldly honour—are amongst the objects of man's most earnest aspirations. Some men are too low, too sordid for these, but also their affections must have something; whether it be money, sensual indulgences, the gratification of the lower appetites, or the love of the lower animals. Some men love their horses better than anything else; and our celebrated misanthropic poet, when he was hurling, as it were, stern defiance against every species of attachment to his fellow-creatures, acknowledged that he still loved his Newfoundland dog. Affection misplaced is idolatry. The world is full of idols. Jehovah is jealous; the idols are broken; and therefore the world is full of mourning, lamentation, and woe. Now the Word of God throws light upon this; it rescues man's heart from this; it presents a true object of affection to him—a master object—worthy of the highest affection of his heart; it subordinates all other affections to this master-key, and presents to him Jesus—Jesus as "the end of the law for righteousness;" Jesus, as the conqueror of death and hell; Jesus, at the right hand of God touched with a feeling of every infirmity of man, ready to hearken and ready to help; Jesus, a Friend on whose bosom the blighted heart may lean and find rest; Jesus, as "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Thus it claims the first affections of the heart for their true and proper object; an object invested with the character of tenderness, and well calculated to win man's affections, while it is at the same time a Divine object, and there is no idolatry in worshipping with all the heart. Every other affection now becomes lawful, because subordinate to this master affection; it does not withdraw the Christian from the others, it only places the others in their just position, in relation to the true desire and love of the heart, which is then turned towards God. Now it is in this way that the Word of God is a suitable instrument for working the necessary change in man as it finds him. It is a suitable instrument, because it is a moral instrument; a suitable instrument, because, in addressing a moral creature, it presents motives, objects of attraction, objects for computation. It addresses his mind as a seat of reason; it addresses his heart as a seat of feeling; and when it is rendered effectual by the secret energy of the eternal Spirit, man is made a new creature by it, having a new mind as to calculations or estimates, a new heart as to desires or affections. He is born again, and "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and "that which is born of God overcometh the world. Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world." It is in this way that it overcomes the world. It overcomes all the calculations of the world by the master-calculation of eternity; it overcomes all the affections of the world by the master-affection for Jesus Christ. This is the prevailing "power of a new affection," as one of our modern masters expresses it. In this way the Word of God is the instrument of man's regeneration. As the apostle Peter expresses it, "we are born again of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God." And this is the reason why a man who is born again, cannot sin in the sense that he did before. He cannot habitually sin by forgetting God, and loving other objects better. He may sometimes forget his new destiny; he may for a time overlook the high position into which he has been brought, and fall into some act of sin—"there is no just man that standeth always and sinneth not;" but he cannot sin as he did in the instinctive thoughts and habits of his mind, because the grace of God is in him. The Word of God has delivered him from his former state of slavery, and he cannot live any longer therein. "How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

This, my brethren, is the agency which we desire to extend in the community; this is the agency which we desire to bring in contact with the mind of the rising generation in our country. We value, indeed, all useful knowledge. We value the learning which teaches the rising generation to understand the works of God; but we value far more that which invites them to look at God himself. We value all that qualifies them for success in this present world; but we value far more what prepares them for salvation in a better. And while, therefore, we are friends to all secular instruction in the schools for which we would prepare masters and mistresses, we are still more ardent friends to the religious teaching there to be given. We desire to have the Word of God, the treasury of Jesus, the rectifier of man's mind, the restorer of his affections, placed continually before the young mind, in order that if possible it may, by the mercy and grace of God, take possession of that mind, before the world has corrupted it fatally, and lead to such an employment of all the things of this world, as shall consist with the chief hope of man's existence, the passing into a better and an eternal world.

But now if this work is to be done effectually, we must have persons who are qualified to do it. We cannot educate except by the instrumentality of those who are themselves educated; and if you are cordially desirous that this great instrument should be brought to bear upon the minds of the rising generation of our land, remember you are now at the fountain of the cause in preparing teachers to carry out your object. A training establishment, such as I advocate to-day, is indispensable for this purpose. It is vain to expect that men or women should teach others adequately, who have not been adequately taught themselves. Proper institutions must be maintained, or we shall altogether fail to secure what the country demands; we shall fail, in short, to communicate scriptural education. The country craves for natural knowledge: and unless the friends of Scriptural instruction place themselves in a condition to compete with those who are ready to give the knowledge of creatures to the entire neglect of God, the work of scriptural education cannot prosper. It is most important, that the friends of scriptural education should take their proper place, lest the succeeding generation should be entirely taken up with the knowledge of creatures. Let the friends of the Established Church, let the friends of Christianity, as given to us in our authorised version of the Bible, come forward and take a prominent position, especially by means of the Institution which is now established. Instead of grieving over the necessity imposed upon us of doing the work; instead of lamenting the anxiety which men show for instruction without religion, let us deal with facts as they are, with men as they are. Instead of wasting our time in grieving that things should be so, let us look at them as they are, take advantage of them, and deal with them in the best way we can. It is in this way that we may make suitable effort; and therefore I ask you to support this Institution, and to enable it to avail itself of the encouragement held out by the government, while endeavouring to train eighty masters, who shall in due time be teachers over eighty schools.

IV. But there remains one other consideration connected with our text, to which I must call your attention for a few moments.

After having stated the origin, nature, and instrument of this work in the Church of God, the apostle adds a few words descriptive of the present position of the church relatively to the rest of the world: "That we should be," he says, "a kind of first fruits of His creatures." So, then, the reason of the Church of God being called out of mankind in the present generation is, that it may be "a kind of first fruits." You remember the Jewish institution of first fruits. The people were commanded, before they proceeded to use the harvest, to take a sheaf of the first ripe fruit, and have it waved by the priest in the temple before the Mercy-seat as an offering; and through this presentation of the first ripe sheaf the whole harvest was sanctified, and followed in due course. To this the apostle Paul refers when he speaks of the resurrec-

tion of Jesus Christ. He calls Him "the first fruits of them that slept;" but it is plain from the context that by "them that slept," he means "them that slept in Christ"—the church or election of God. Christ is the "first fruits," and they are the harvest. But here the same figure is used in a different or more advanced sense. The apostle James calls this church, "a kind of first fruits of His creatures;" bearing a somewhat similar relation to the remainder of the creatures that Christ bears to the remainder of the church. This is remarkable. The creation is described in Scripture as in a groaning state. Man himself is described as "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." There is an earnest expectation of something spread far and wide in the world, and it is actuating men in every country. There is an earnest expectation of some grand improvement in the state of the world. Various persons have various panaceas for this purpose. One expects the improvement to be wrought by one mode of political action, a second by some other mode, and a third by some social changes. Men, ignorant of the Word of God, are devising schemes of their own, as the result of which they anticipate that there will be no more oppression, no more vice, no more want, no more sorrow. These Utopian schemes are set forth on every side, all betraying an expectation of something better. Well, now, here we learn what it is. Although men are not themselves conscious what they are waiting for, we are here informed that it is "the manifestation of the sons of God." In the succeeding passage we learn what this means; it means the redemption of the body from the grave. We ourselves are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." It is for the resurrection of the church that the world is waiting and must wait. No scheme of man can regenerate, because no scheme of man can get rid of sin; no superstructure can stand which has sin at the foundation. That which shall make the world the seat of righteousness, and every home the dwelling-place of happiness and peace, is the "manifestation of the sons of God" at the second coming of Christ; and for the resurrection of the church in Christ's righteousness and the establishment of His kingdom over the earth, the longing anxieties of men are now in earnest expectation. True, they do not know what they are waiting for, but it is our privilege to know. When it is said, therefore, that 'the present systems of religion cannot stand,' I reply, granted. When it is said, that 'they cannot make mankind happy,' I reply, granted again. They never were intended for that purpose. The present state of things was intended to take a people out of mankind—"a kind of first-fruits." Why is it said, "a kind of first-fruits?" Because the parallel is not exact. Christ is the first-fruits of the church. The church, as the first objects of His care, are to be brought to see what He is. "We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is." As the harvest is like the first sheaf, so shall the church be like Christ. The creation could not be made exactly like the church; it could only be made happy in the same sense as Paradise was so. The church is not called a first-fruits; but, "a kind of first-fruits"—a *ἀπαρχή* of God's creatures. This ought to be a source of satisfaction to men who hear the master-spirits of the age pouring contempt upon Christianity. What can such spirits do to regenerate society, or to make it better than Christianity has made it? They will be disappointed, if they entertain such an expectation. The men of most intellect are not the men who have the most morality, the greatest happiness, or the tenderest affections. Man is not to be made happy through his intellect. The heart has more to do with happiness than the intellect; and no powers which man possesses can regenerate society, or make it essentially different from what it is. Such considerations, however, should not in any way hinder the earnest, the constant, and the enlarged use of means on the part of the Christian church. We should earnestly desire to gather as many as possible to our number—"the Lord adding to the church daily such as shall be saved." We are bound to use all lawful means to cul-

tivate the understanding, to win the affections, and, above all, to bring men to God. But our expectations are quite a different thing. What are our expectations? Not that we shall be able to change materially the relative proportion between the church and the world. We remember that our Master has said concerning this matter, "Many are called, but few are chosen;" we remember that He has declared, "The way of life is narrow, and few there be that find it; while the way of destruction is broad, and many go in thereat." Our expectations are bounded by such sayings as these, and we are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. What is the world waiting for? What does it cry for? Improved institutions. What, then, should be the cry of the church? "Come, Lord, quickly." Here is that which will improve our institutions. The sceptre of His kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness. Where He reigns, there will be "a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness." We shall have no occasion to teach one another then; we shall have no occasion to correct each other's mistakes with regard to His character; "for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." He will be "merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will He remember no more." That is the "new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness," and for which we are waiting. Now, my brethren, if we have our expectations rectified by these sayings of truth, while at the same time a sense of our duty is also strongly and deeply impressed upon our minds, we shall not allow these expectations to prevent us from being as earnest in the discharge of our duty as if we knew that we could save our fellow-men. There are some who persevere in what they feel to be their duty, and in the end experience only disappointment; there are others, who allow the rectified expectations of the Christian church to hinder them in the earnest discharge of their duty. These are both mistakes. Let us be as earnest in the discharge of our duty as if we could accomplish universal salvation; and, at the same time, let us guard against the impatience and impetuosity which would discard existing systems, and pour practical contempt on Christianity: rectifying our expectations by considering what Christianity was intended for. Was Christianity intended to bring the world by its own means, or by any means which man can add to it, to a saving knowledge of the truth? There is no proof of any such intention. The history of Christianity is more like that of a pilgrim than that of a conqueror. Where it has gone, it has made comparatively few converts. We complain most justly that the masses are still in darkness and ignorance; but we need not allow this, I repeat, to interfere with the discharge of our duty; though our "expectations" should prevent us from joining those who would pour contempt upon established instrumentalities as if they had not accomplished their purpose. They have accomplished their revealed purpose; they are accomplishing it every where. Where the Gospel has been preached, a people has been called out, separated from the evils of the world, and made "a kind of first-fruits" of what the world shall become in due time. But everything in its time, and there is a time for this. Now is the time for labour; now is the time for teaching, and for winning the population, as far as in us lies, to the allegiance of Christ. We can fix no limits to our duty of endeavouring to win the population to the greatest possible amount of saving knowledge of the Word of God. For this purpose we seek to multiply schools, that they may be effectual while we have them; we ask you—and it is your proper province—to enable us to prepare teachers for these schools. And finally we ask God's blessing on the work, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE RESURRECTION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. FRANCIS F. STATHAM, B.A.,

Incumbent of St. Peter's Walworth.

PREACHED IN EMMANUEL CHURCH, CAMBERWELL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1849.

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."—Phil. iii. 10.

THE apostle St. Paul, in the argument preceding these words, has been cautioning his Philippian converts against the snares and persecutions of their unbelieving Jewish brethren. Remembering to how fearful an extent their malice had been visited upon his own person, and influenced perhaps by some lingering reminiscences of his own former unrelenting spirit, when he was as yet unconverted to the faith of the crucified Jesus, he cautions them—"Beware of dogs"—that is, of those cruel, censorious, vindictive judaizing teachers, who would gladly worry and devour you—"Beware of evil workers, beware of the *circision*;" and then, as though willing to show them in what the true circumcision not made with hands should consist, he subjoins, "*for we are the circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh*." But this accidental mention of the relative sources of confidence of the circumcised son of Abraham, and the uncircumcised Gentile convert, affords him a noble opportunity of expatiating upon the freedom of God's grace in the salvation which is by His dear Son. And hence, after enumerating the several particulars in which his zeal and obedience to the Mosaic law had been manifested, he declares unto his disciples, that he had cheerfully resigned all dependence upon the meritoriousness, real or imaginary, of these legal works, that he might throw himself unreservedly upon the mercy of God in Christ, and "be found in Him not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." "That I may know *Him*," continues he, "and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Now the example of the great apostle to the Gentiles, in this particular, has always seemed to me, one of peculiar weight and influence, in deciding authoritatively upon the all-important question of man's acceptability before God through faith in Christ Jesus, and through faith in Him alone. For it is to be observed, that St. Paul had had ample opportunities of testing both the revealed schemes. He had lived, as a pious and consistent Jew, under the covenant of works; and, by the mercy of God, he had been led to choose "the better part," and to come by baptism into the faith of Christ under the obligations of the covenant of grace. And his decision, therefore, is one of unexampled importance; his experience, if we may so speak, as an earnest-minded conscientious man, independent of his authority as an inspired servant and minister of God, is of the utmost value to us, in directing us to the true grounds of every sincere Christian's hope. St. Paul had *tried* to work out his salvation through the righteousness which was of the law, and had failed; he had gone through the entire circle of legal observances—nay more, he had outstripped his fellow-countrymen of Judea, in zeal, in strictness, in unremitting obedience to the letter of the written code; and what is the result? Does he find that this

course has brought peace and serenity to his conscience? Can he look back upon his long array of meritorious activity, with any well-grounded satisfaction, that it will procure him peace at the last? No. Hear at how small a price he values it *all*—that he may attain to the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus (his) Lord.” “What things *were* gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” And again—even yet more emphatically, and still referring to his blamelessness in the righteousness which is of the law—“Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of *all* things, and do count them but *dung*, that I may win Christ.” The knowledge, then, of Christ Jesus, which was so precious to the heart of the converted apostle, was the knowledge of Him as of his redeeming Lord. He knew that in Him was “wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption”—that in Him God was “reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”—that in Him was “light and life,” “joy and peace in believing.” He knew that through Christ was there “an effectual door” opened into the true Holiest of holies—so that *what* in the weakness of the flesh he could not accomplish, namely, a perfect and unbroken obedience to the law of the carnal commandment, he might now in the person of the crucified Jesus attain unto, and be counted righteous before God, yea, even “the righteousness of God in Him.” He knew that in Christ Jesus he had found, not only a God, but a Saviour; not only a Saviour, but a Friend; not only a Friend, but a Comforter—One who would be with him in all his trials and persecutions to strengthen, stablish and settle him; to supply him with unceasing energy to persevere, and with unfailing courage to fight manfully in the warfare which he was henceforth to maintain against all the enemies of His salvation.

And oh! my dear Christian friends, may God of His infinite mercy grant, that ye all may attain unto the like saving knowledge of your crucified Lord. May ye all be enabled, by the indwelling spirit of faith, to welcome Him to your hearts, as your solid and substantial hope, to *know* Him, not by the hearing of the ear alone, or by the vision of the inward and intellectual eye alone, but experimentally in the heart and in the affections, as your true and only Saviour, as your Advocate and Intercessor, your Shield, your Rock, your Defence, your only Foundation whereon to build successfully the hope of eternal pardon and forgiveness: “for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus the Lord.”

But what is this that the apostle further speaks of when he says, “That I may know Him, *and the power of His resurrection?*” Is this some new knowledge of Christ, distinct from that which we acquire at the foot of the cross? Must we follow Him through “the grave and gate of death,” that we may learn effectually the whole sum of the blessings to which we are entitled through faith in Him? Assuredly yes, brethren. And herein consists one of the great advantages which we derive from a careful commemoration of this holy festival. We are at this solemn time of Easter invited, in a more than usually impressive manner, to ponder upon the stupendous miracle of our risen Lord, and to see how, in thus bursting asunder the fetters of the grave, He becomes entitled to shower down upon us additional consolations and blessings, and to be “the first-born among many brethren,” who shall, in like manner, at the great judgment-day, rise from the long sleep of death unto eternal glory. Yes, dearly beloved, it is indeed “good for us to be here”—

watching, with the astounded Roman cohort, Christ breaking in a cloud of effulgent glory from the gloomy cerements of the tomb. Oh ! ye who have lately wept when ye beheld Him nailed by cruel hands to the accursed tree—who have witnessed with pain and sorrow of heart His bitter agony, His dying thirst, His final groan—draw near by faith, and see how that cold and blood-stained corse is now again instinct with life immortal. The bonds of death have been snapped asunder of Him, as the green withs before the hands of the awaking Sampson ; hell and the grave are despoiled of their victim ; and Christ Jesus, the risen Saviour, appears again, to revive the hopes and cheer the hearts of His desponding disciples. Yes, watch for a few moments with those mailed guardians before His lonely sepulchre, and then you will perceive in all its eloquent force the meaning of the apostolic phrase, “ the power of His resurrection.”

For, behold, this is now the dawn of the third day—including, according to the Jewish method of computation, the day upon which the Incarnate Son of God was crucified. It is as yet but sun-rise—but the hour is emblematic of the coming triumph, for the “ Sun of righteousness ” is about to rise again, after His temporary withdrawal from the horizon of a dark and wicked world, and to rejoice as a giant in running His resplendent course. But even at this early hour there are anxious eyes awake ; Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, have with a pious haste forestalled the coming dawn ; and, as the first-fruits of their veneration for the honoured dead, “ have brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him.” We may believe that they have hovered near the sacred spot, where they had laid the Lord during the intervening Jewish Sabbath ; but their apprehensions of the brutal soldiery, or their unwillingness to infringe upon the sacred rest of the holy day, have hitherto withheld them from any nearer approach. But now, partly in faith, partly in hope, but entirely in love, they have brought with them the precious materials for embalming the body, and are drawing near with timid and anxious footsteps, cowering around the home of all their hopes like the sweet-singing bird of heaven, which fears to approach, yet cannot be scared from, its lowly, earth-formed nest. And what is the scene which presents itself to their eager gaze ? Yes, there is the sepulchre, with its pale, white front, gleaming in the first up-shooting rays of the morning sun ; there is the ponderous stone rolled to the mouth of the cave, as upon the sorrowful eve of the crucifixion-day ; all is as yet undisturbed ; the seal is upon the face of the stone ; the vigilant Roman sentinels, to whom it would have been death to have been found sleeping at their posts, are grouped around, resting upon their spears, and ever and anon turning an incredulous look towards the silent tomb—for they have heard the taunting remarks of the inveterate Pharisees to their superior in command, “ Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.” But what is this sudden convulsion, which in one moment terrifies them, and appals them in the way ? What does this fearful trembling of the earth forebode, and this bright effulgence of light which gleams across their path ? Why are the keepers shaking with terror, and are “ become as dead men for fear ? ” One brief, hurried glance has revealed it all ; the angel of the Lord, whose countenance is like the scorching lightning’s blaze, has descended visibly from heaven before them. His celestial arm, nerved with more than human might, has rolled from the sepulchre’s mouth its ponderous

door, and the glorified body of Jesus has appeared in God-like majesty in the luminous opening. Oh ! well may the terrified keepers flee from the searching gaze of that calm and dignified countenance ! The same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they have scourged, and nailed to the cross, is now standing tranquilly before them ; once again He breathes, whose precious life-blood had followed the track of their piercing spear. They are amazed, and confounded, and terror-stricken, and they dare not abide that scrutinizing glance.

And what is there, brethren, in the lapse of time, which should dull our sight to the view of this stupendous miracle ? We have not, it is true, to see the Lord of life and glory visibly with our mortal eyes, as He appeared on this, the bright morn of His triumphant resurrection ; yet, have not saints died and martyrs shed their blood to assure us of the reality of this mighty truth ? Did not our blessed Lord show Himself to be indeed risen from the dead, by many infallible proofs ? Was He not seen of His disciples, “ alive after His passion,” for forty days ? and did He not, even after this, appear visibly unto Stephen, St. John, and unto St. Paul himself, on his journey of persecution to Damascus ? Yes, dearly beloved, we may well be assured both of the reality and the power of Christ’s resurrection, were it upon no other testimony than that of the great apostle of the Gentile church ; for in every sentiment of that eminent servant of God, in every ardent longing of His soul for Christ, in every trial patiently endured, in every cross so cheerfully encountered, we see his faith in the wondrous truth convincingly corroborated, and learn with him to be rapt in awe at “ the power of Christ’s resurrection.”

But not alone, brethren, as a stupendous display of miraculous interference, should we learn to regard this rising of our Lord from His silent tomb—not alone as a *fact* in itself of so astounding a character as to satisfy us at once of the Divinity and Omnipotence of our Saviour ; the *doctrine* also of Christ’s resurrection from the dead is one full of power to the soul of the believer, and in every way calculated to fill it with themes for grateful contemplation. Let us, then, in humble reliance upon the Divine blessing, now devote a few thoughts to this interesting mode of regarding the subject.

And here, let us first contemplate the power of Christ’s resurrection, as an incitement to personal holiness and to the mortification of sin. Throughout the whole of the Gospel records we see Christ Jesus proposed as the example for the faithful imitation of His consistent disciples ; and, indeed, so essential is this moral likeness of the believer to Christ, to the stability of his immortal hopes, that the apostle in one place very emphatically says, “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.” Moreover we may affirm, that this essential duty of conformity to Christ’s death and resurrection is permanently offered to the Christian’s attention, in the very form of the initiatory baptismal rite, by which he is enrolled among the number of God’s chosen people. For, as you will all doubtless remember, in the primitive church, this holy sacrament was administered by *immersion* ; that is, by plunging the body of the person to be baptised beneath the surface of the water ; and by this significant rite it was intended to be taught, that we should, in the baptismal waters, be as it were laid in our graves—be buried with Christ in a death unto sin, that with Him we might rise again unto newness of life. Thus we find in the apostolic writings, continual reference to this figurative and sacramental death unto sin, in the temporary shutting out of the world

beneath the waters of baptism. "We are buried," says St. Paul to the Romans, "with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And although, from the rigor of our northern climate, the practise of total immersion at baptism has become comparatively extinct, yet must we never forget, that the thing signified is still prefigured in our mode of administering the sacrament; and our church, therefore, calls upon all her baptized children to remember "that baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of Christ and to be made like unto Him, that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living!" And assuredly, if we were more constantly to fix our eyes upon our risen Saviour, this solemn consideration could not fail to recommend itself unto our frequent thoughts. Shall I remember that Christ my Redeemer hath risen from the dead, and is henceforth seated at the right hand of God in glory, and shall not my heart follow Him by its rising aspirations to the height of His bright abode? Does it become me to be base and grovelling in my desires, while He, the Captain of my salvation, is so far exalted above all that is earthly and sensual and lifeless? No; let me rather imitate His soaring form; let my heart be set wholly on the things that are above, where Christ my Redeemer sitteth at the right hand of the throne of God; let my affections be no longer enchained to the things of sense—a higher and a nobler sphere of duty awaits me. I will live much in Christ's presence, and that is an atmosphere of holiness and joy and peace; I will crucify those sins which have contributed in so mournful a manner to steep His righteous soul in anguish; I will walk as becometh the sons of light, in purity and meekness and truth; I will think of "the power of Christ's resurrection," and it shall incite me to rise with Him to newness of life, to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

But, secondly, the power of Christ's resurrection is manifested upon the heart of the believer, in that it furnishes him with a satisfactory assurance of his own future immortality. I do not mean to affirm, that we could never have had any conception of the realities of a future state, but for the resurrection of our blessed Lord; for many of the enlightened heathen, even before this miraculous event, had argued from the dignity and superiority of man's nature, that his end should be more glorious than that of the beasts that perish. And, indeed, we may in one sense declare, that the Almighty had, from the very first dawn of the creation, taught this great scriptural truth in the universal language of mysterious nature. When, for example, He separated the light from the darkness, and appointed the sun and the moon to "divide the day from the night, and to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years," was He not setting in the heavens those unwearied witnesses to His everlasting truth, that each dying day goes to the grave of a blessed resurrection; that the sun which sinks in the West, sinks but to rise again; the moon which wanes, does so but to shine with renewed and undiminished splendour; and that each returning season, in its admonitory lesson of departing usefulness, should speak to us powerfully of restored vitality. Or who, brethren, could

have ever pondered thoughtfully upon the buried grain, which, in the silent grave of the earth's dark bosom, swells and germinates, till, with the returning heat, it sprouts and buds, and brings forth fruit, "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold"—who, I say, could ever have pondered thoughtfully on this, and not have heeded the prescribed instruction—"Thou too shalt live again?" But these, and all other such vague and natural ideas of a future state, received full confirmation in the raising of our adorable Lord. Then was it to be seen, not only that man's resurrection was possible, but that it was certain; not only that his *soul* should live again, but that his corruptible body should, by the power of Christ, be endowed hereafter with a new-born energy; in a word, that in the sublime language of our apostle to the Corinthian church, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Oh! happy estate of the baptized children of the faith! They are not left to doubt and to surmise upon their uncertain condition in futurity. No—Christ Jesus hath died and risen again, to assure them that they also, if found faithful in Him, shall be partakers of a joyful resurrection. He is but "the first-born among many brethren;" "the first fruits of them that sleep;" and even as He, the Author and Captain of our salvation, has passed through the portals of death unto glory, so shall they also who "sleep in Jesus," arise at the summons of His archangel's trumpet from the crumbled dust, and be reunited for ever with the Lord, in the joys of a blissful eternity.

And who, brethren, with these hopes, with this bright destiny before him, can be content to live on in a state of careless and unawakened apathy? "Awake," rather, "thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." Yes, be urgent in thy desire for spiritual regeneration here below; and He shall quicken thy dull spirit, and infuse into thee that vital energy of a renewed heart and mind, which shall form thy earnest and thy pledge of a more perfect resurrection beyond the grave.

But, lastly, the power of Christ's resurrection upon the soul of the believer is more especially felt in the sweet confidence which he thereby gains, that God the Father is completely satisfied with the meritorious sacrifice of His dear Son, and that Christ Jesus himself is, in this His final triumph over death and the grave, fully entitled to "save unto the uttermost those that come unto God through Him."

Had the Divine mission of our adorable Lord been wanting in this consummating proof of its authenticity, we might have been left to despondency and doubt as to the fulness and completeness of His atonement for sin. For He himself had, before His precious death and burial, with prophetic exactness, referred to His future resurrection, and instanced it as one irrefragable proof of His omnipotent Godhead. "I lay down My life," had He said, "that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." But now, inasmuch as by His rising from the dead on the third day, He hath fully accomplished His own prophecy, we are not only assured thereby that He is in very deed and truth the Almighty Being that He represented Himself, but we are also thoroughly certified, that by the same exertion of His omnipotent will, He can as readily raise us from the corruption of the grave, and present us faultless before the throne of His eternal Father. "I am the resurrection and the life," said He; "he that believeth in Me, though He were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth on Me, shall never die." Oh! who can doubt the truth of this encouraging declaration, when he knoweth that the lips which uttered it have, in proof of the Divine authority of the Speaker, been sealed in the grave, only to be once more reanimated with the breath of life? Who can distrust Christ's will and power to save, when he sees Him

first raising from the rigid torpor of death the body of His beloved friend, and then in His own person laying down His life, that He may, by His own inherent Godhead, take it up again, and walk the earth for a second time in a resplendently glorified frame? Learn, then, dearly beloved, to make this all-powerful Saviour your constant trust. Pour out your frequent and fervent supplications to Him, that He will be pleased to send His Holy Spirit into your hearts, to assist you in shaking off all spiritual sloth, and in rising to that newness of life, which can alone show your appreciation of your immortal destiny. Think solemnly and habitually of your preparation for the dark and narrow confines of the grave; but let no sense of its terrors affright you. Its icy chains may, indeed, for a time hold your corruptible body enthralled in the sleep of death; but there is a bright dawn in store for you, beaming with the sunshine of a never-dying glory. And if ye be found "buried with Christ" in His death," ye also shall be made partakers of His blessed resurrection, and shall rise, with saints and martyrs and patriarchs, to meet your Saviour in the air, and to enter with Him into the bliss of those everlasting mansions which have been prepared of old for all them that love Him. Oh! may this be the happy lot of all those who are now present before me! May the words which have been spoken, in all weakness and infirmity, be blessed by the all-powerful grace of God to the improvement and awakening of your hearts; and may ye all so watch for the coming of the Bridegroom, as that "when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, ye may also appear with Him in glory," and be raised by the power of His might to "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and which passeth not away."

THE RUINS OF NINEVEH.

A Lecture,*

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH SORTAIN.

DELIVERED AT THE ALBION ROOMS, BRIGHTON,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 17, 1849.

Before the members of the Brighton Literary and Scientific Institution.

As when, some years ago, you did me the honour to listen to a few remarks on the History and Origin of Language, I must again beg leave to advert to the principle on which—in the midst of duties too numerous and too awful to allow of mere literary or scientific tastes—I feel more than justified in thus appearing among you. Every day, every hour of late years, has proved the inseparable relation between knowledge and devotion; between a truly philosophical spirit, and a truly religious disposition. Never, so much as now, has the anxious student of the highest of all truths—the Christian Faith—such grounds for gratitude to the scientific traveller in the Desert, or the cautious antiquarian in his closet. Never, so much as now, has the voice of history—physical and mental—been so audible, or so consonant with the voice of God. And this alone must be my warrant for listening myself, and for asking you to listen likewise to its affirmations.

Permit me to state that when—induced by the kind importunity of some of the members of this Institute—I engaged to address you, my own Oriental studies had led me to the careful examination of Layard's work, entitled "*Nineveh and its Ruins*," a work which has awakened most singular interest—to incite you to the perusal of which is one of the objects of this Lecture. I shall therefore aim not so much to give you an analysis of these volumes, as to offer you that information without which much of them must be, to those who are not Oriental students, unintelligible.

With the name of "*Nineveh*" we are all of us familiar, from the fact that it occupies so prominent a place in the book of the prophet Jonah. In the division of nations, Moses (Gen. x. 8—11) having spoken of the *beginning* of the kingdom of Nimrod, in the land of Shinar, adds—"out of that land he went out into Assyria" ("out of that land went forth Asshur") "and builded *Nineveh*, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah."

From an incidental expression in the book of Jonah, we learn that it contained more than six score thousand persons, *who could not distinguish their right hand from their left*,—young children who had not attained the use of reason. By this reckoning, there were in *Nineveh* more than six hundred thousand persons. Incidentally the prophet Isaiah speaks of it as the metropolis of the great Assyrian monarch Sennacherib. And the prophet Nahum unveils its extent and grandeur by the expressions,—"*The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one another in the broad ways.*" "*Their infinite store of pleasant furniture.*" "*Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven.*" "*Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers.*" And in the words of Zephaniah, she was wont to boast, "*I am, and there is none beside me.*"

I quote these authorities of Holy Scripture with especial emphasis, because they are the only cotemporaneous histories extant that are intelligible, until *yonder*† written characters are deciphered. Deeply is it to be lamented, that although Herodotus—the father of profane history—promised a History of the Assyrians both in § 106 and § 184 of the *Clio*,—either he never fulfilled his

* This Lecture was delivered extemporaneously.

† Alluding to some specimens of the cuneiform character which were exhibited.

intention, or his records have been lost. The latter fate has befallen the Assyriaca of Abydenus. Meanwhile, however, we have the words of Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii., that "Nineveh was 150 stadia in length, 90 in breadth, and 480 in circuit : " that is, about seven leagues long, three leagues broad, and eighteen round. Its walls were 100 feet high, and so broad, that three chariots could drive abreast upon them. Its towers, of which there were 1500, were each 200 feet high." "Ninus," says the historian, "hastened to build a city of such magnitude that it should not only be the greatest which then existed in the whole world, but that none in succeeding ages who undertook such a work, should easily surpass it. Wherefore as the whole circuit was 480 stadia, his expectation has not been deceived. For no one has since built so great a city, both as to the extent of its circuit, and the magnificence of the wall."—lib. ii. § 3. Ammianus Marcellinus says that the ancient Ninus was "*civitas ampla*."—lib. xiv. c. 8. And Eustathius has this note on Dionysius's *Περὶ γηγενέων*, loco—"Fourteen myriads were employed for eight years in building this city." Strabo says that Nineveh was greater than Babylon—lib. xvi. How fully all this agrees with the inspired description—"Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey!"

While this unrivalled metropolis of Assyria was standing, a poor private provincial declared, "With an overrunning flood will God make an utter end of the place thereof, He will make an utter end." Bishop Newton remarks, "Let us then suppose that a person should come in the name of a prophet, preaching repentance to the people of this kingdom, or otherwise denouncing the destruction of the capital city within a few years. I presume we should look upon such a prophet as a madman, and show no further attention to his message than to deride and despise it : and yet such an event would not be more strange and incredible than the destruction and devastation of Nineveh."

Now what were the actual facts ? We must recollect that all the laws of historical evidence warrant our acceptance of these prophetic foreshadowings. Some years after, Xenophon, in lib. iii. c. 4 of his *Cyropædia*, writes of Nineveh under a Greek name—"After this defeat the Persians retired, and the Greeks, marching the rest of the day without disturbance, came to the river Tigris, where stood a large uninhabited city." Lucian speaks of Nineveh as so completely laid waste, that even its vestiges did not remain. *Gibbon*, speaking of Niebuhr, in his *Travels in Arabia*, observes, "He passed over Nineveh without perceiving it. He mistook for a ridge of hills the old rampart of brick or earth." "WHERE," EXCLAIMS VOLNEY, "ARE THOSE RAMPARTS OF NINEVEH ?"

"The passage of the Tigris," says Dr. Grant, writing in 1839, transferred me from Mesopotamia into Assyria ; and I stood upon the ruins of Nineveh, *that great city*, where the prophet Jonah proclaimed the dread message of Jehovah to so many repenting thousands, whose deep humiliation averted for a time the impending ruin . . . Where her gorgeous palaces once resounded to the strains of music and the shout of revelry, a few black tents of the wandering Arab and Turkoman are now scattered among the shapeless mounds of earth and rubbish, the ruins of the city, as if in mockery of her departed glory ; while their tenants were engaged in the fitting employment of wearing *sackcloth of hair*, as if for the mourning attire of the world's great emporium, whose merchants were multiplied above the stars of heaven."

And a very recent writer, one of only the last year, and one who emulates the sceptic Strauss, in his *Notes on the Old Testament* observes, "So celebrated a city had not even the sad consolation of leaving to posterity a remembrance of her last struggle. Her sufferings are 'blotted out by the springs of Lethe ;' a harder fate, says a Greek poet, than suffering itself. We can only infer, that about the year 615 B.C. her waning star dipped beneath the ocean, where it disappeared for ever." That poet is *Æschylus*, who in his *Agamemnon* says,—

— "σπόγγης ὥλκεσεν γραβήν
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων μάλλον οἰκτείρω πολύ."

As if he would thus bring some arrow from the shaft of the Pagan, in order that he might inflict a wound upon the faith of the Jew and of the Christian, and at the same time involve us in a common emotion of anxiety and of awe ; at the very moment only confirming the prophecy of the Old Testament, that Nineveh should be overwhelmed, and that there should be an end of her for ever.

You have before you the *site* of Nineveh, as far as the probabilities arising from history and prophecy may determine. [The place where the remains of Nineveh have been discovered, was here pointed out on a map.] A statement given by *Mr. Rich*, which is well worthy our notice, is not mentioned by Layard :—

“Opposite the town of Mosul is an enclosure of a rectangular form, corresponding with the cardinal points of the compass : the eastern and western sides being the largest, the latter facing the river. The area which is now cultivated and offers no vestiges of building, is too small to have contained a town larger than Mosul, but it may be supposed to answer to the palace of Nineveh. The boundary, which may be perfectly traced all around, now looks like an embankment of earth or rubbish, of small elevation ; and has attached to it, and on its line, at several places, mounds of greater size and solidity.”

“Out of a mound in the north face of the boundary was dug, a short time ago, an immense block of stone, on which were sculptured the figures of men and animals. So remarkable was this fragment of antiquity, that even Turkish apathy was aroused, and the Pasha and most of the principal people of Mosul came out to see it. One of the spectators particularly recollected among the sculptures of the stone, the figure of a man on horseback with a long lance in his hand, followed by a great many others on foot. The stone was soon after cut into small fragments for repairing the buildings of Mosul, and this inestimable specimen of the arts and manners of the earliest ages irrecoverably lost. To this day stones of very large dimensions, which sufficiently attest their high antiquity, are found in or at the foot of the mound.”

Now by these quotations I have endeavoured, first of all, to bring before you that which as an extemporaneous speaker I could not feel warranted in mentioning without specific authorities. You are, then, to bear in mind, that after Nineveh, which had been built by the side of the Tigris, had outvalled all other cities, as to magnitude and as to wealth—after it had maintained its political position, as the metropolis of Assyria, the mightiest nation which we find as cotemporaneous with Egypt and with Palestine in the Sacred history—after having sent forth those fearful monarchs who tore the ten tribes from the consecrated land, and bore them away into captivity, and replaced their desolate homes by their own overflowing population—after having sent forth from the Tigris, through its connection with the Euphrates, merchant ships, so that they are spoken of as in number like the locust—after having warred, and that with success, with Egypt and Babylon and Persia,—and this for many a day,—a poor provincial man uttered the very prophecy which I have quoted ; and it has been fulfilled till within eight years, though Maundrel and Pocock and Bochart and Botta (a very celebrated and intellectual Frenchman) pondered over the whole of that scene. Will you go with me for one moment to our Downs—those beautiful outlines, where you find, apart from vegetation, and almost from verdure, much majesty and beauty ; and as you stand there, will you say to yourselves—‘As I look around, how know I but that beneath these mounds are the remains of some ancient cities, some splendid palaces, some noble fane, some marked vestiges of civilisation and of art ?’ Our science helps us instantly to discover, that these mounds contain them not ; but at the base of the Dyke of Nineveh, as at the base of the Dyke of Brighton, did Mr. Layard stand, without any more promise as to what the embosoming verdure should conceal ; and onwards did he grope, and there did

he find those solemn, truthful developments of the fact that there had been a very great city; "lords many and gods many" had there been worshipped, and there were engraven, as it were indelibly, on the walls of its palaces and temples, words which should breathe and which should burn, as posterity is made intimate with those great works of civilization, which confirm and illustrate the purposes of God.

Having thus stated these facts, in order that I might incite you to some interest in the circumstance of Mr. Layard's discovery of Nineveh, allow me just to remark, that before Mr. Layard had examined the mound of Nimroud, where Nineveh has been discovered, a very lofty and generous-minded Frenchman, M. Botta, had been engaged in examining a neighbouring mound, called Khorsabad, where he discovered various remains of civilization and of art, and among these some cuneiform characters. I hold in my hand a paper which was sent to me by one of the most distinguished antiquarians in France, a Christian clergyman, detailing some interesting circumstances connected with M. Botta's discoveries at Khorsabad, and proclaiming the liberality of the French Government, in bringing home these vestiges to the Louvre; and I am sure you will not think me using language disloyal, captious, or even Gallican, when I say that the Louvre is amply filled, whilst many of the vestiges which Mr. Layard discovered, our "British economy" has not yet given us, though it was through pain and fatigue, and almost through poverty, that he extracted them.

There are three mounds of particular importance—Konyunjik, Nimroud (the one to which Mr. Layard has especially given his attention,) Kalah Sherghat and Khorsabad—the spot explored by M. Botta. I am not at liberty to state the personal history of Mr. Layard, but this I know sufficiently to intimate it to others, that he issued forth from England, almost with nothing but his satchel and his staff, resolving with a manly heroism that he would identify himself with Eastern habits. He laid aside all the peculiarities of the English character, and partook of his salt and his oatcake with the Arab. He travelled on, step by step, acquiring knowledge and influence, till at last no man could distinguish him from an Arab. The djerrid was just as familiar to his hand, as he rode across the plain with an Arab's flight, as it was to the ancient Esau. And as he gradually acquired influence, still keeping up the love of his father land, with an earnest wish that he might make the discoveries of science abound to the honour and glory of Britain, did he seek out the simple spot of Nineveh and there explore it. Will you for a moment think of him? He is going to Constantinople; he is descending the Tigris. As he proceeds on a raft he says:—"I again saw the ruins of Nimroud, and had a better opportunity of examining them. It was evening as we approached the spot. The spring rains had clothed the mound with the richest verdure, and the fertile meadows, which stretched around it, were covered with flowers of every hue. Amidst this luxuriant vegetation were partly concealed a few fragments of bricks, pottery, and alabaster, upon which might be traced the well-defined wedges of the cuneiform character. Did not these remains mark the nature of the ruin, it might have been confounded with a natural eminence—[The Dyke!] . A long line of narrow mounds, still retaining the appearance of walls or ramparts stretched from its base, and formed a vast quadrangle."

I cannot think of a much more sublime moment than that of which Mr. Layard was conscious, when he thus looked on this apparently voiceless tomb. It was not a whited sepulchre, which was fair without, but which had nothing but dry and unsightly bones within. It was a verdant mound—it was the sepulchre of ancient time; and as he looked at it, there came athwart him the thought—"My curiosity has been excited, and from this time I vow that I will thoroughly examine these singular ruins." And I do say that this was a sublime moment, because his discoveries do not simply throw out certain vestiges of civilization and of art, do not simply awaken our curiosity or our

delight, as we look at his exhibitions of tact and of skill (for he is the impersonation of them both,) but because they prove one of the finest historical evidences in support of those great prophecies for which I live, and for which, God giving me grace, I would die. Everything tributary to that thought is to me grand and glorious, and therefore endearing.

Observe, then, as the result of this his discovery, some of those things which are calculated to awaken our intensest interest. I felt for many a day, as I was thinking of this lecture, how difficult it would be for me to exhibit anything so as to interest the eyes of those who might honour me as an audience; but casually, spontaneously, a man distinguished in art, very distinguished in travel, the companion and friend of Bonomi, the associate of Sir Gardiner Wilkinson; a man who has ruined his health by long *Oriental investigations* as to architecture, and who by his skill is recognised in the world of art, as deserving of admiration—I mean Mr. Arundale, who is here—kindly drew specimens, in order that he might (he was pleased to say) first show his attachment to myself, then his love to science, and then his anxiety to interest yourselves. They are drawn on a large scale. He, in the midst of many engagements, drew them from Layard's copies of those vestiges which he brought from Nimroud to England. You will find that beautiful though they are, and he himself will say rough, they are nothing in comparison with those remains of art which nearly four thousand years ago were imbedded in the mounds of Nimroud, and which have only been brought to sight within the last five years. No, Mr. Arundale's pencil could not surpass the exquisite beauty, skill, and power of delineation, which you may find if you visit the British Museum, where these vestiges of art are exhibited; and he, I am sure, will concede it; calling forth from him, as a great artist, admiration of the highest degree, and awakening a solemn and anxious desire to ascertain how those Egyptian artists, whom he has studied so long, were keeping pace with, or surpassing, or falling behind the Assyrian artists whose works are here delineated.

[Eleven diagrams, copied from Layard, by F. Arundale, Esq., were then exhibited and explained.]

Now upon this interesting subject suffer me to introduce a grave, and I think a solemn, and I hope not inapposite reflection. Some years ago I was walking down Fleet-street—nay, it was when I was a boy—and I saw in the window of a man called Carlile, who (I believe) then boasted in his infidelity and gloried in his shame, though I trust after years brought him to a more thorough consideration, so that he confessed his wrong and accepted the faith of Christianity; I saw in that window, young as I was and open to impressions and to be misled, a grotesque picture of what was called the God of Israel; while other forms, fanciful, almost blasphemous, gathered from the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah, surrounded this Jewish Divinity. I should like the man who drew that picture, if he would be thoughtful, just to exercise something like philosophical elevation of mind, and to come with me to one of these sculptures, that were cotemporaneous with the period when Ezekiel described his vision and Isaiah uttered his prophecy. Let him, if he choose, laugh at those exhibitions of the winged bull and the winged lion—figures with the face of a man, the wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion or a bull; but my philosophy tells me this, that in the early epochs of human life, to which the facts of the Jewish Scriptures refer, hieroglyphic symbols were introduced. So that when men would convey, as an emblem of the Deity, in the first place, intellect, they gave him the face of a man—in the next place ubiquity, they gave him the wings of an eagle, as if he were independent of space—in the next place, strength, they gave him the members of an ox; and if they would add any other emblem, say that of nobility and grandeur, they gave him the limbs of a lion, the king of the forest. I ask, am I wrong? Am I, apart from Christianity, not called upon by literature, by science and by philosophy, to contend, that when I have those cherubim brought before

me in the Old Testament Scriptures of Almighty God, and when I have those spirits who are possessed of six wings, "with twain whereof they cover their face, with twain their feet, and with twain whereof they do fly"—instead of this being a mere mawkish phantasy of an excited imagination, it is a form of a great law of intellectual transference, by which the sternest principles of imagination and of inquiry were conveyed to observers. I care not though profane men ridicule these inspired symbols. I look at Nimroud, and I know full well that there is a great exemplar to me of a law of thought, which if I know aught of philosophy, I know to be as just as the most recondite and elaborate of communications of common language, in its relation to that thought which is infinite and absolute and Divine.

Now having looked at these diagrams, the question will naturally arise—'But of what use is it that we have done so, apart from the gratification of our curiosity?' You ask me, and you have a right to ask me, 'Is there any record coterminous with these sculptures, from which, as from writing, we can ascertain anything as to what they are and to what they refer—just as you may find on some grave-stone, exhumed from a churchyard, not merely some grotesque figure, but some characters written over or about it, by which you can determine for whom it was intended?' Yes, we have. We have found not merely these images, but we have found written characters; and we have found them, too, under such circumstances that it does not need as much faith as it does to be a Christian, to be confident that a few years, if not months, will give to them a most direct and emphatic, and authentic translation. On this point, then, I am anxious, in order to inform you of some things which have come under my own notice, because these studies have been of late more in my direction than most others.

A few years ago Major Rawlinson—one of our greatest East India diplomatic officers, those noble men who suffer both in head and in body for their country—having been placed as a political resident at Bagdad, and being a highly cultivated scholar, devoted his attention to the inscriptions that are to be found in different districts on the rocks in Persia. He discovered on a rock vast remains of what we call cuneiform, or arrow-headed characters, and strove to decipher them. He found that one parallel line assisted the other. Any one who is anxious to ascertain this, may observe, in the Archives of the Royal Asiatic Society, that he has succeeded, and has commended himself to all scholars, in the translation of those documents by which some of the most interesting facts connected with the reign of Darius are substantiated. The characters are precisely the same, though the arrangement is different, as discovered by Mr. Layard in Nimroud; and the clue having been found for the one, the clue will most likely be found for the other; so that within a few years, and by the effort of simple philological perseverance, shall we have these characters uttering forth a voice of the highest import, filling up the chasm which Herodotus allowed to remain, and telling us of those great monarchs who cultivated science and art, but who by their devastations involved themselves and others in dismay and in destruction.

These characters appear to be very much alike; you can see a resemblance between them and what we call a wedge; yet you will observe that they are differently arranged—some of them being parallel and others horizontal—and are thus capable of conveying different combinations of sound. Now it is of the deepest interest, that at the same time that these characters were thus engraven on rocks, a cursive character, such as what we call round hand, was existing both among the Syro-arabian tribes and the Copts. Why were these cuneiform characters used for engraving on the rocks? Was it not simply that they were more easy of construction in sculpture? Again, I have been met by the objection—"Do you not perceive that these Syro-arabic characters are written from the left hand to the right, and not from the right hand to the left; that contrary to the custom of Oriental, they adopt that of European languages?" "Certainly I do." But here is one of the most extraordinary

facts—and I submit that the following hypothesis is tenable. These records were written on rocks, or on cylinders, from left to right, in order that they might be transferred to the papyrus, at the same time preserving all the laws of writing, of orthography and of punctuation.

In the nineteenth chapter of Job, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses, it is thus written, as translated by Landseer, in his "*Libyan Researches*:" "Who shall ordain now that my words shall be *drawn*? Who shall give that in a *memorial* they shall be *delineated*? That with an instrument of iron and lead they shall be *cut out in the rock for ever*?" Whether or not this translation is a good one, it is not for me at present to determine; but you who recollect anything of the book of Job will remember the passage in which he wished that his words should be written on a rock, and with lead, and for ever. Umbrent—the great translator of the book of Job—gives us this version—"Would that they were written with pen and iron and with lead, and inscribed upon the rocks for ever." Landseer says—"They were first cut in the rough with an iron or steel instrument, and afterward finished by the friction of the corundum stone reduced to powder, and applied by means of *lead*, for the softer, or more porous the metal with which it is applied, the more rapidly will the friction operate." And then he adds, that all seal-engravers and sculptors are aware of this, and employ a soft, or porous metal, in order to make their work appear more beautiful. When I visited the British Museum, where the images containing these cuneiform characters have been deposited, I drew my hand across them—they were almost sharp enough to cut one's fingers—and immediately my incredulity was awakened, and I said, "Have not these been freshened?" "Never; on the authenticity and integrity of Mr. Layard, they have not been touched." So that here is a circumstance which the statement I have just mentioned at once explains. You may see the slabs on which these characters are engraved in the British Museum; and I especially refer you to the little black obelisk chiselled in basalt, which you will find in the centre of the gallery containing them, and which will, I believe, issue in as much importance as the Rosetta stone; so that we shall verily be able to read in our own tongue these records of the wonderful works of God.

Mr. Arundale has asked me to advert to the difference which may be discovered in the Egyptian and Assyrian art. In the Assyrian you will observe the most exquisite contour—high elegance—all proportions—all convolutions; you will find the principle which, if I recollect aright, Hogarth says is the line of beauty—the curve—which we have not in the Egyptian; and looking at them as cotemporaneous, we ask, why is the difference? This will be answered by the painful fact, that the Egyptians were under a law of the most stern and rigid character; whereas the Assyrians had a more flexible and salient economy.

Having thus endeavoured to bring before you the foregoing topics, my object being more to incite you to the study of Mr. Layard's book, and incidentally that of the prophet Nahum, as the great prophecies of the destruction which should come upon Nineveh, suffer me to close, by adducing two or three reflections of another and of a different character. But before I do this, "honour to whom honour is due;" and I feel it a grateful task to avow one's obligation to a fellow-man, that we have these remains, and that we have the prospect of other vestiges being discovered and submitted to the English public. Our nation owes this to Sir Stratford Canning, one of the British ambassadors, who when Mr. Layard was not recognised by any authorities at home, lent his purse and his sympathy to this high-minded and toilsome young man; otherwise he would have sunk beneath his effort. Let us indulge in the high noble behest of a consecrated humanity, in loving our fellow-men when they do good and brave acts; and above all, let us not feel that we are exclusive, in our gratitude, when we love that man, in addition to his intellect and his liberality, because he is a Briton.

I must now close an address which, I fear, has already been too prolonged.

The deep interest which I feel myself, and which I have endeavoured to awaken in your minds for this subject, is not, I am sure, exaggerated; for whether we regard its aspect towards the history of civilization and of art, or whether we study its bearings on the sacred Records of our faith, it proves its high claim to our reverent attention. That imagination must be torpid indeed, which is not aroused by memorials of the past, so palpable as these. They call for no spontaneous images of the fancy—they themselves provide images which impersonate grave and solemn thought. And, further, these written characters—transcripts of the intellectual processes of their authors—transcripts which have gone through no editions in which the text may vary or become corrupt, bring us into the closest fellowship. You will, I trust, take the earliest occasion of visiting these remains; and as your eyes gaze upon those ancient slabs, and trace the very imprints of the ancient authors you will, by your own excited thoughts, compensate for my deficiencies this evening. You will find in yourselves the truth—

“*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.*”

The works which have appeared amongst us, at the beginning of the year, suggest, from their patience of thought and research—some most interesting reflections. It is well known that, during 1848, the labours of the press, in France and Germany, have been almost absorbed by political diatribes. Those men, who were wont to challenge our attention by philosophical theories the most abstract and comprehensive, have been summoned down to social questions the most conventional. The history of the past, in all its great salient facts and broad generalizations, has given place to the specific details of the present. The science of the absolute has been postponed to the claims of the contingent. This is not to be wondered at. All men are not like Archimedes, or Montaigne, or Hegel, who could study the laws of the projectile, or the passions of the human heart, or the destinies of man, while in peril of exemplifying them by becoming their victims. And hence the literary pause on the Continent. Meanwhile the productions in our own land, during the year so fateful to others, have been unusually valuable. The lists of our great publishers have not, as heretofore, been filled with works as frivolous as they are temporary. Macaulay's *History of England*, Layard's *Nineveh*, Dennis's *Cities of Etruria*—these and others most signally indicate, by their publication, not only a calm thoughtfulness in the authors, but a presumed attitude of attention in their readers. The strifes and dangers of other nations may have given vivacity to the current of our thoughts,—but, by God's mercy, we have been saved from the uncontrollable impulse of the cataract, or the inert despair of the victim in the Maelstrom. Let us think of this, and let us intellectually, as well as morally, be grateful.

The whole of these thoughts chime in with the social, conventional, or political events, happening in the world now-a-days. I can never think of those vast dynasties to which we have referred, as having passed through all their magnificence and their grandeur and their glory—as having dictated laws, subordinated nations, and brought all beneath their own fiat, yet as having at last crumbled into the dust, without for one moment thinking of that mighty power, which in its majesty and its goodness seems to give permanence to Britain. I cannot sympathise with those who strive to destroy the bulwarks of our land; I cannot in any sense or shape sympathise with those who regard our insulated character as though it were incompatible with a high cosmopolitan condition, which Britain has shown in such an especial manner, breaking the bonds of the slaves, and distributing moral freedom and liberty to the benighted and untaught. I cannot but think that God in His mercy must have had some great end, whilst in the crash of nations he should have main-

tained unscathed our land, and have kept the Shechinah of our Christian light and life still beaming in its brightness. Kirke White, young as he was, seems in his poem on Time to have shadowed forth the contrary, when he says :—

“ Where now is Britain ?—where her laurel’d names,
Her palaces and halls ? Dash’d in the dust,
Some second vandal hath reduced her pride,
And with one big recoil hath thrown her back
To primitive barbarity.”

Again—

“ Through her depopulated vales, the stream
Of bloody superstition hollow rings,
And the scared native to the tempest howls
The yell of deprecation. O’er her marts,
Her crowded ports, broods silence, and the cry
Of the low curlew, and the pensive dash
Of distant billows, breaks along the void ;
Even as the savage sits upon the stone
That marks where stood her capitol, and hears
The bittern booming in the woods, he shrinks
From the dismaying solitude. Her bards
Sing in a language that hath perished ;
And their wild harps, suspended o’er their graves,
Sigh to the dying winds a dying strain.”

Oh ! if I descend from the pulpit to the desk of the Lecturer, suffer me to close my address to you by that which is most congenial to my office (it is the bargain that I make ;) and you must not think that I detract from the laws of this Institute, where no Theological points are to be canvassed, when I say that if we would have the prophecy of Kirk White falsified, we must become more devoted ourselves. In social life we must become more pure, and more full of love to the forlorn and the destitute, the poor and the perishing. We must be more active ; there must be more of that uniting element, combining man with man, so that the maxim may be fulfilled—“ Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but sin is a reproach to any people.” I beseech you, look at the position which our country now occupies. Do not think of it as the mere words of the Gazette, but think of it as the reflection of your own closet. Our land hath not yet arrived at that point to which we should aspire ; it is not as bright, it is not as good, it is not as enlightened, it is not as benevolent, it is not as generous to its inhabitants and to the whole family of man, as it ought to be. It is not as tolerant to the erring and as kind to the forlorn as it might be. It must have a resurrection, though not a resurrection which beings who are themselves revolutionary and exciting would propose, but a resurrection to newness of life. Then will the words of Milton be appropriate to us as a nation :—“ Methinks I see in my mind a noble and a puissant nation rousing herself, like the strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks ; methinks I see her, as an eagle, nursing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam ; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means.”

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ISLINGTON,
ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 25, 1849.

The Annual Sermon for the Protestant Association.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?"—Matthew xvi. 3.

"THE prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished." God has endued us not only with a power of recalling the past, but of forecasting the future; and as the recollection of the past is fitted to make us wise for the present, so the anticipation of what is to come is oftentimes no less eminently fitted to direct us in our present path of duty. And as God has endued us with the faculty of anticipation, so it hath seemed Him good that there should be certain indications—in things natural there are such indications—of what is about to arrive. Thus we know, "when the fig-tree putteth forth its leaves, that summer is nigh at hand." We know, from certain indications in the sky, whether the morrow will be fair or foul. Even the very brute creation, from the instincts implanted in them by their Creator, take cognizance of these signs; and when God in ancient times would elude His people for their inadvertency, He tells them that "the crane in the heavens knoweth her season, and that the turtle and the swallow observe their times, but that Israel knew not the judgment of the Lord." Our blessed Redeemer reproves the same inadvertency and indiscrimination, on the part of the men of the generation when He was upon earth. They came to Him vainly asking a sign, when signs the clearest and the most convincing were on every hand. He traces their lack of conviction to its true source—not the lack of evidence, but the lack of earnestness—not the lack of truth, but the lack of a heart to receive the truth; and therefore He says—"When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

It is, therefore, a mark of an insincere and of an undevoted heart, to be inattentive to the indications that God sends to His church. In every period of the church it has been the duty of God's waiting servants to be as watchmen on the walls, looking around them, as well as suppliants at a throne of grace, looking above them. And if in ordinary and tranquil periods of the church such has been their duty, how much more imperative and urgent the duty at a period pregnant with events such as characterise the day in which we live! If, when the indications of the purposes of God and His approaching dispensations were dim and indistinct, they even then ought to have been traced, what

excuse will be left to the men of this generation, if they do not discern signs that are striking as the lightning flash, and distinct as the sunbeam ?

It is therefore, brethren, a practical and a seasonable subject to which we invite your deep and devout attention. We desire to call before your minds some of those characteristic features of the day in which we live, which for their prominence and for their import may be justly regarded as the decisive "signs of the times." Subsequently, we shall call your attention to some of those weighty and practical lessons and duties, which these "signs" inculcate on the children of God. May His Spirit be with us, that His Word may not return unto Him void !

I. The difficulty, in a field so wide, is to select those points that are of deepest moment. But amongst these, and as fundamental to the rest, no man who has paid any attention to the course of events, to the current of civilised society, can fail to have been struck with that rapidity and acceleration of all circumstances and events which characterise the present period. It is usual in the history of nations to measure events by centuries ; but now we are called to measure them rather by years. Cause and effect seem to be linked together closely as the lightning flash and the thunder peal. There is an impulse given to the universal mind and moral feelings of the civilised world. It is difficult to trace all the secondary springs, from which this mighty impulse has arisen. The diffusion of information through the multiplied and ever-multiplying channels of the press—this has had a wondrous power on the mind of Europe, cultured as that mind is becoming more and more. The rapid enlargement and acceleration of intercommunication has greatly contributed to the same effect. By the application of steam to travelling by land and by water, distance has been well-nigh annihilated, and lands severed by the ocean brought into one. And now, as if this did not suffice, it has pleased God to signalise modern art by a discovery which approaches nearer to something preternatural than aught that ever was devised by human skill—that electric telegraph, by which information, with almost more than lightning's speed, with the speed of thought itself, is transmitted from city to city, and may peradventure be transmitted from shore to shore, till the world is brought to be (as it were) of one language and of one family. Time was, when it would have been deemed the wildest dream of madness to have foretold what now has actually come to pass. "Men run" literally to and fro, and "knowledge is increased." The rapidity with which intelligence is transmitted marvellously increases the power of that intelligence. It comes like the shock of the earthquake, and that shock is repeated again and again. What used to affect feebly, because it was distant, now affects as though it were at our very door, and is brought to us with a freshness and a force and a suddenness which has almost all the power of present and surrounding reality. All this has tended to give fresh speed to the wheels of human circumstances, and to the advancements of human society ; and as a consequence there is a high pressure on the moral, on the spiritual, and on the social world—a pressure that is startling, appalling, most solemn.

If there be one feature more than another, therefore, that stands out transcendantly in the present day, it is the rapidity with which all events are precipitating themselves on some dread consummation. The avalanche that rolls from the top of the Alps, as it gathers magnitude, so it gathers moment

as it descends, and the nearer it comes to crush (it may be) the villages that are stretched underneath, the more fearful is the velocity it attains ; and even as the wondrous circumstances of Providence and the wondrous developments of the great and mighty drama of Divine wisdom are coming to their crisis, they increase in speed as they approach the goal of their consummation. Everything seems to tell us—The state of things, as it has been, is passing away ; the end is nigh ; the machinery of the world is going at a rapidity that threatens to break it up by the friction and the force of its own movements.

But arising out of this and connected with this is another most awakening and impressive characteristic of the day in which we live : the positivity, the boldness, the breadth of opinion and of party and of confederacy, which may be everywhere traced. Time was, when the mass of Europe slumbered like the iceberg, bound together in its frozen chains ; but now the ice is thawed, and the waters are heaving, darkly and deeply and fearfully. Time was, when the mighty multitude of minds in the civilized world were torpid, degraded, debased ; they had no definite opinion, no decided purpose, and therefore their owners had no decided action ; but that negative condition is well-nigh gone, and even where the least of intellectual light and culture is possessed, there is an electric influence from awaking and kindling minds elsewhere that tells upon them, and they are dead and motionless no more. Time was, when men might hold opinions loosely, and those opinions were not in danger of being wrenched from their grasp—when the vessel might safely ride upon the shallow, with her anchor only cast in the sand, because there was no storm to drive her ; but now men must come to some definitiveness of sentiment and of opinion and of party ; they must make their election with Christ or with Antichrist, with the seed of Satan or the seed of Emmanuel. The rallying cry is gone forth, and each man is taking his side ; there is a mustering and a marshalling of the foes of truth and of the friends of truth, on either hand ; and though we as yet see but the first indications of the movement, yet we can discern in those indications the shadowings forth of stupendous confederacies—how like comes to like and kin to kin ; and by and bye we shall see Christ's host, on the one hand, and Satan's host on the other.

Nor is it, brethren, to be less noticed, that into all this mighty conflict of opinion, this mighty mustering of rival principles, the religious element most deeply and extensively enters. At this moment there is no one subject in Europe that awakens such profound interest as religion. Whether it be true or whether it be false ; whether it be as a political engine or whether it be as loved for the sake of Jesus, either way and everyway, religion is no longer a thing cast out of the high places of the earth. It may be introduced but to be betrayed—it may be dealt with but to be scorned—it may be wounded in the house of its false friends, even in the great places of the earth,—but nevertheless it forces its entrance everywhere, and almost all the stirring topics of the age are topics which involve religion. Does not this strongly remind us of the prophetic sentiment of a great statesman, gone to his grave—"The next war in Europe will be a war of opinion, and the most terrible the world ever witnessed ?" And might we not add, that to a large extent it will be the war of religious opinion—the war of infidel and papistical opinion, against "the truth as it is in Jesus ?"

Connected, again, with this feature, and to a large extent its result, there is another and more patent and palpable sign of the times, which the commonest

amongst us must have been forced to note in the year gone by ; and that is, the incipient heavings, the incipient throes and shocks of national and political revolution. The memorable year of 1848—what a history it would make ! The events that used to be spread over a century were concentrated into that fateful year ; and the historian who should write all its details must multiply his folios to do justice to its events—how much more, to do justice to its results ! What those results may be—what those results, as they now impend, are likely to be, no man can well discern, but he that taketh the more “sure Word of prophecy, as a light shining in a dark place ;” and by means of the beams that it casts on the dark future, he can indeed discern things that make him tremble before his God. Yes, brethren, who would have foretold at the close of 1847, that ere 1848 had run its course, the mighty dynasty of France would have passed away like a vapour before the morning sun ? Who would have foretold how Austria should be shaken to her foundations—how Prussia should tremble to her very base—how all Italy should be convulsed and upheaved—how every minor State should more or less share the earthquake—and how Britain herself, the favoured land, yet the favoured land of Protestant truth and constitutional liberty, should herself be sifted, though not subdued ;—who could have foretold at the close of the one year the stupendous events that should be thronged into the coming year ? And, brethren, has the tempest ceased, or expended its fury ? Is the volcano exhausted ? It is only slumbering—gathering its elements for a still more terrific eruption. And who does not foresee mighty combinations already forming, and the almost unimaginable convulsions ready to break forth through the womb of the future ?

But intimately connected with this is another most impressive, and, viewed in the light of prophecy, ominous spectacle—the shattered and yet spasmodically struggling state of the Papacy. Its first deadly wound was given to it by the first French Revolution and its consequences ; its second and more deadly wound is due, to a large extent, to the recent French Revolution and its results. And how humiliating it is to those who put antichrist for Christ, and who regard the vaunted and pretended successor of St. Peter as occupying the chair of God’s viceroy upon earth, to see the mighty one flying for his life from his beloved children, as, in bitter mockery, one would suppose, he often styles them, in the disguise of a servant ! Oh ! how fallen from the proud purple pontiff, standing on the balcony of St. Peter’s, and stretching forth his hands to bless the crouching myriads, who seemed to worship the man more than his Maker ! Look at him in his present position ; his own children having cast him off—his cardinals participators in his flight—the Papacy, as a civil power, declared to be at an end—Rome itself loathing its “father,” as he was once fondly called—and that father, with unpaternal feelings, invoking the sword of the warrior to avenge him on his recreant children. Surely, “he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.” The very fatuity which characterises the Pope seems to assure us that his downfall is irreparable. It is marvellous to see Rome, while in one important respect thus wounded, fearfully energetic ; and the death-struggle will be still more dreadful. Notwithstanding that she is thus enfeebled and virtually dethroned, what millions upon millions of our fellow-creatures, ay, of those of our own country and language, are still held in the dark spell of Rome’s sorcery ! Yea, with what a strange and monstrous contradiction is she still seeking to win proselytes in England,

and in England's colonies, and in the United States of America, whilst all her own more immediate children are loathing her; rending asunder her scarlet vestments, and discovering her nakedness and her abominations! What a marvellous state of things! Surely it is big with omens. And yet all the while, instead of learning wisdom in the school of affliction, Rome and her pontiff are glorying in their shame; and Decrees are issued addressing the Virgin Mary in language which for the boldness of its blasphemy was never equalled in the dark ages; enactments are published, and claims set forth, which for their despotic and daring character, cast Gregory himself, with all his assumption, into the shade. Surely, the infatuation on the one hand, and the prostration on the other, alike tell us that Rome has "come up in remembrance before God," and that "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," is about to receive the fearful cup of vengeance. Oh! that the cry went forth from the church of the Reformation as it ought, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!"

But in close connection with this, and not a whit less marvellous, though fraught with far different omens, is the present state of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem's exiled children, whilst Babylon, and her bewitched children, are thus becoming desolate. The Jews themselves have ever held that Rome is now what Babylon was of old in relation to the chosen people. And, consistently with this, they also hold that until Rome be destroyed, Jerusalem will never be restored. They conceive that the downfall of Babylon will be the deliverance of Zion—that the death knell of the one will be the bridal chime of the other. And what do we behold even at this very juncture? Rome's weakness has led to Israel's emancipation. The Jews in Rome, long kept in a state of the vilest and most loathsome degradation and exile, have been proclaimed free; while the Mahomedan power itself, the mystic river Euphrates, dried up till its strength is gone, has relaxed the iron grasp with which it so long held the outcasts of Zion in thralldom; Jerusalem is opening her bosom to receive the first-fruits of the long, unpromising harvest from her scattered seed; and it is a circumstance fraught with marvel and with promise, that a decree has been issued by the Mahomedan power for the erection of a magnificent synagogue, or, as the Jews would falsely term it, a magnificent temple, in Zion; and further, that the Jews are at the present moment actively engaged in seeking to raise liberal contributions, that they may be enabled to build a structure which shall, if possible, rival the gorgeous temple of Solomon. We do not lay much stress on the mere circumstance of such an erection being contemplated; but we lay great stress on the fact that liberty should be granted to build, on the one hand, and that their hearts, throughout the world, should be moved to build. Surely, the time to favour Zion is nigh, when not only the Gentiles think upon her stones, and it pities them to see her in the dust, but her own wandering children, from east and west, north and south, rousing from their criminal indifference and unbelief and hardness of heart, are beginning to think upon Zion, and to sigh for her, and to seek to return. Surely, when we observe these two signs of the times, the shaking of Babylon and the awakening of Jerusalem, we cannot but believe that the great consummation is at hand.

And there is yet a further sign of the times, which, if we omitted to mention, we should certainly leave the picture imperfect, namely, the widely extended,

and God be praised, the increasing diffusion of the Gospel of Christ throughout the heathen world. Augustine, one of the holiest and best of the early fathers, declared, that could he but see the Gospel preached in every nation as a witness to all men, he should deem that the church's triumph was at the door. Our eyes see this, and our ears hear it. What fathers, and confessors, and martyrs, in earlier, and perhaps, in some degree purer days, never saw or heard, we are privileged to see and hear. The mighty angel, having the "everlasting Gospel" in his hand to preach to all nations, has gone forth through the length and breadth of the world. This great feature of the present day is wonderfully predictive of the coming triumphs of Christ; for we do not imagine that whilst nominal Christendom shall be scourged, perhaps almost consumed in the furnace, poor heathen lands, which have never had Christianity to degrade or to deny, will share the judgments of apostate Christendom: rather do we think that the Gospel will be more rapidly diffused in such lands; and that the converts of Israel, becoming glorious apostles, as were their ancestors in the early days of the church, shall preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" to the Gentiles, and bring the fulness of the earth into the church of the Lord.

II. Having thus, beloved brethren, given you a hasty, and an imperfect glimpse of the signs which characterise our times, we now desire, with brevity, but with earnestness, to inculcate some of the lessons and the duties which those signs are adapted to teach.

To begin, where all ought to begin, with the individual conscience and the individual heart, let me ask, do not these say to every man, as with a trumpet-voice—Look to thine own principles and to thine own state before God; search, try, scrutinise thy soul, and see how dear to thee this truth is? Is it so dear that neither loss, nor cross, nor shame, nor suffering, nor the rack, nor the block, nor the stake, would, or could, the Lord vouchsafing strength, lead thee to forsake it? Be assured that sifting times are coming. The chaff will be swept from the threshing-floor, the wheat alone will remain: the furnace is heating; the dross will be consumed, the gold will be refined and purified. See to it that it is the gold of grace which is in your hearts. Oh! that in the precious words of the second lesson of this evening's service you may be able to speak of that which you "have seen with your eyes, and heard with your ears, and your hands have handled of the Word of life;" that you may have it not merely as a theory in the head, but as life in the heart. If you bear not slighter trials and lighter crosses now, how will you be able to stand when the whirlwind sweeps around you, or how will you proceed when the "swellings of Jordan" are before you? Be faithful to yourselves, beloved brethren. Look to the Lord to establish your heart, for His coming draweth near.

The next great lesson we may learn is, that there is but one sure rallying standard for the host of God's elect, and that standard is the inspired Word of God. While the Bible has, at no former period, been so much studied, and read and circulated, and we trust in God, loved, as it is at present, at no period was it ever more assailed by a thousand modes of attack, some insidious, some open, some exhibiting all the deadly hatred of undisguised infidelity, and others seeking to betray it with a kiss. We believe that the infidel spirit of the more cultivated classes in Europe is terrifically on the increase. Thank God, so far as our own country is concerned, the infidel spirit which so largely infected the lower orders has been to a great extent counteracted; but we see

in a thousand shapes a more plausible and disguised species of infidelity, developing itself in the proud intellectualists of the age, and we fear that the last development of antichrist will be, not simply or mainly Romanism, in its dark degrading superstition, but in its last fearful disclosure of a gigantic and bloody atheism.

Brethren, under such circumstances, where is truth, and what is truth? where is stability, and what is safety? The Scriptures of the living God. Nearer and nearer to this one point of union will God's faithful be brought. Though we would not disparage conscientious differences of opinion—far from it—yet we believe that all minor distinctions are as nought compared with the one great distinction of receiving the Bible as the fulness of inspiration, receiving it with the simple submission of faith as the one infallible standard of our salvation. More and more may we be brought to this great concentration—the Bible—Jesus as revealed in the Bible, the great point of union.

Beloved brethren, there is another lesson also of deep importance—a lesson which ought to awaken our tenderest compassion, to rouse our most fervent zeal. If the ancient structure of the Papacy is tottering to its fall, and if those who are within its ruined walls must be crushed in its demolition, what yearning of heart, what fervency of intercession, what zeal of effort ought the church to manifest in trying to snatch men from impending ruin—yea, and how much more to hold back the infatuated men who are going down the inclined plane which leads to the abyss of darkness and misery! Would that the pulpits of our land uttered more unequivocally the voice of warning and of counsel in this matter! and would, too, that all our lay brethren were up and doing, girding themselves for the work!

And surely, there is another lesson, brethren—that whatsoever we find to do we should do it with our might. If everything national, social and political is accelerated, shall there not be an acceleration of everything spiritual, scriptural, and Divine? Let not the servants of God be outstripped and outdone by the servants of sin and Satan. If the armies of the unfaithful are at their post, let the armies of the Lamb of God, the Captain of our salvation, be at theirs. There is no time for slumbering now; for while we slumber everything around is advancing. We must be up and doing; and blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find working and watching, watching and working still.

And, brethren, what a lesson do we learn for our land and for our church,—for the land of our fathers, for the church of our affections upon earth! What do we learn? That the truth as it is in Jesus is the only stability of any economy, and that in proportion as that is lost the whole becomes unsound, and hastens to destruction. What kept England calm amidst the storm, and caused her to be almost unshaken amidst the shock of Europe? What but the amount of scriptural truth which is yet to be found in her—the amount of indirect, as well as direct influence exerted by the Gospel of Christ Jesus over the masses of her population? Search as you will for other causes, you will find none but this which will account for the effects. Whatever other causes may have been subservient and auxiliary in securing the end, they would all have proved insufficient without this cause, and all more or less owed to it their origin or their energy.

To maintain the truth, then, in our land; to maintain it in our high places and our national assemblies; to maintain it throughout the borders of our

beloved church, is our first and dearest duty, and should be our chief aim as philanthropists, as churchmen, and as patriots. Brethren, the Institution whose Anniversary you are assembled to commemorate, however it may have been misconstrued, however it may have been scoffed at, or coldly and partially sustained, has been amongst the faithfullest and foremost witnesses to the great truth, that Christ Jesus ought to rule on the nation's throne, as well as in the hearts of the people of the land ; that the Word of God should guide the statute-book of the country, even as it directs the faith of the saints, and influences their walk in private life ; and never, never may this Institution lower her standard, on which there ought to be always inscribed, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Alas ! alas ! that any should hold the godless sentiment, that religion has nothing to do with the politics of a land ! No, it has not, if that land is to be atheistic, and to say, "There is no God ;" but if that land is to hold that He who made it, sustains it, and decides its destiny, then the more of religion we have in our Government, the more of religion we have in our Parliament, the more of religion we have in every ramification of the nation's rule, the nearer the nation comes up to the standard of Scripture, and the more God's blessing will rest upon the land. Oh ! that our country may have her eyes opened to this great truth, and retracing the false step which she has taken, may dare to stand forth before the world, professing "the truth as it is in Jesus !" Then "God, even our own God, will give her his blessing," and all the ends of the earth shall see that "the Lord is in her of a truth."

Beloved brethren, it is a shame that such an Institution as this should be so scantily and insufficiently supported, so crippled in its means, and enfeebled for effort. Give as God disposes you, in order to help it in its work. Finally, and above all, may each one of us be found so prepared, that whether our Master come at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning—come to us in death, or come to us in His sudden revelation from heaven, we may be able, with trembling, but with triumphant trust, to say—"Even so, Lord Jesus ; come quickly."

THE SAVIOUR OF MEN.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. JOHN HAMBLETON, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1849.

Before making a Collection on behalf of the Colonial Church Society.

"I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys."—Song ii. 1.

WHEN, through the grace of God, the believer is led to know Christ for himself, his constant desire will be that others may know Him too. This is especially the case with regard to Missions. Hence, on the present occasion, wishing to interest you afresh in a cause not new to this congregation, the Colonial Church Society, I know not how I can more hopefully make the attempt, in humble dependence on the Spirit's blessing, than to seek to interest you afresh in Him to whom, I hope, ye are no strangers—even Him who is Himself the theme, the motive, the pattern and life of all true missions—even the Lord Jesus Christ.

For this purpose I have selected a text which presents Him in a very pleasing figure, or rather, in two figures collectively, where He says of Himself—"I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys." Some interpreters, indeed, have understood it as spoken of His church or people; but it certainly suits in reference to Christ himself. All that is excellent and beautiful in His church is through union with Him and in resemblance of Him.

Christ, then, the "Rose of Sharon"—this is our first point: Christ, "the Lily of the valleys"—this is our second; Christ, to bloom here in our own garden, and also in the desert and the waste waiting for the culture of our Colonial Church Society—this is our third topic of consideration. And may the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Word of God, "take of the things of Jesus, and show them unto us."

I. Consider first, then, Christ, "the Rose of Sharon."

Many are the figures employed in Scripture to denote the excellencies of Christ. These are so many and so great, that no one figure could possibly express them all. The lion of the forest, for instance, may rush forth before our minds, and remind us of His noble character, as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah;" but then we want also the lamb, so meek and gentle, even "licking the hand upraised to shed its blood," in order to point out to us the milder virtues which adorn the Saviour, who prayed even for His murderers. So, in the text now before us, "the rose" sets forth some of His excellencies, and "the lily" others.

Why, then, we should ask, is He compared to "the rose of Sharon?" Because the rose is the chief of flowers—of surpassing beauty, of interesting hue, of sweetest fragrance. The valley, or plain of Sharon, reaching from Cesarea to Joppa, was famous for its roses.

Now is not the Saviour of surpassing beauty? Not, indeed, in the eyes of all; in the judgment of many He "hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." To discern spiritual beauty requires a spiritual mind. We all understand this. Take a blind person into a garden filled with the most beautiful flowers, and of course among them the rose, that principal flower; he might perceive their fragrance, but of their beauty, as it so strikes and pleases your eye, he could have no perception. You become eloquent in praising the beauty of this flower and of that, and especially of the rose; but you obtain from him no response. You ask, 'How is this?' 'Alas! my friend, I am blind.' Just so it is when a person is spiritually blind; he can actually see no grace, no excellence, no loveliness in Jesus, in whom, the Word of God testifies, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He was all the perfections of the Godhead and of the manhood in one Person—"Emmanuel, God with us." Is not holiness perfectly beautiful? Sin is deformity; it is that which makes man vile; God calls it "that abominable thing, which I hate." But in Christ there is no sin at all; in Him is perfect holiness; all virtues concentrate in Him. Surely, if the eyes of our minds are enlightened by the Spirit of God, we must admire the exquisite beauty of this "Rose of Sharon."

The rose, most commonly, in its hue is red. Ah! and has this no significant meaning for us? Is not Christ's perfect beauty deeply stained with red? Did He not shed the blood which alone cleanseth us from all sin? Did He not suffer "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God?" But this crimson hue is properly no disfigurement—it is rather His most exquisite adornment. Had Christ not shed His blood for us, we might have gazed at Him, as some of us may have gazed at a noble plant in some conservatory, at which we may have taken a passing look, but with no hope of ever being able to call that beautiful flower our own. But by His precious bloodshedding Christ has proved Himself a suitable Saviour for us, willing to become our own. Surely, there is beauty in the blood-stained visage of the Saviour—comeliness in His pierced hand, access to His heart for sinners through His wounded side. Often may the red blush of the rose remind us of Christ crucified for us. How attractive that crimson hue!

And then the rose, how fragrant! By the blessing of God in His providence, my brethren, we shall now in a few short weeks have the spring bursting forth in all its beauty; and then, with roses scenting our gardens, we can spare to Arabia her spices, and need not envy Ceylon her groves of cedar. But how fragrant far the merits of Christ! How His intercessions perfume the prayers and services of His people; so that what they do from love to Him becomes acceptable to God, as He beholds them trusting to His beloved Son for justification! And what they ask in Christ's name, His Father has pleasure in granting, because His Son is worthy, for whose sake He would grant all their heart's desire. This is why a cup of cold water, given in Christ's name, "shall in no wise lose its reward," because the principle of love to Christ, which prompts to that humble gift, evidences faith in Him, and so honours His merits and mediation, in having given Himself for us, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." This is why deeds of kindness and love, wrought faithfully in Christ's name, are so well-pleasing to God. They prove your resemblance to "the Rose of Sharon"—they evidence your spiritual union with Him, and show that His Spirit has now given life to

your souls. This is why the ministers of Christ, wherever they preach faithfully His Gospel, are "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish"—"of death unto death" to these, "of life unto life" to those; because the fragrance of Christ's precious merits extends itself to the message and the messenger of His Gospel, offering salvation through His name to all the sinners of mankind.

Thus is Christ "the Rose of Sharon"—for beauty, for redness of hue, and for fragrance. Is not Christ interesting to us all, under this resemblance? Will not the rose of the garden often call to mind "the Rose of Sharon?"

II. Let us now view Him, in the second place, as "the Lily of the valleys."

This is not thought to be the plant commonly known to us by that name, but a larger plant, well known in Jordan, of singular whiteness, say some, and if so, beautifully emblematic of the Saviour's perfect purity. See how two figures unite their distinctive beauties, to represent to us one and the same Saviour. The blood-stained rose and the white lily, twined together in the same hand, or growing near each other in the same garden, remind of Him who, being pure and spotless, "fairer than the children of men," of unsullied excellence, yet shed His blood to atone for the sins of others. Let us remember to look not only on the Lily, but also on the Rose—to think of Christ not only as the very best Man that ever lived, and the Son of God in human nature, but also as the atoning Saviour, the propitiation for our sins.

But He is the Lily "of the valleys." He came down from heaven to earth. This was to descend into the valley of humiliation. He condescended to the manger of Bethlehem, to the exile's flight into Egypt, to a youth of obscurity at Nazareth, to a manhood of poverty, shame, ignominy, suffering, crowned with that death on the cross. He was "the Lily of the valleys," buried in the tomb of Joseph. His resurrection was the Lily burst forth from its earthly abode, more beautiful than ever; His ascension was (to keep up the figure) the transplanting of this "Lily of the valleys," to bloom and flourish in the Paradise of God. And He is still "the Lily of the valleys," loving to dwell with lowly hearts. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Let us never forget, that the lowly Saviour dwells with the lowly. This beautiful Lily will not grow in sunny places, amid the flaunting flowers of this world's pride and vanity; but it loves the shade, where such plants as humility, meekness and penitence are found. Where you find these, look diligently, and you will find "the Lily of the valleys" not far off.

The lily also is fragrant, although its fragrance differs from that of the rose. "His name is as ointment poured forth," which again diffuses another different fragrance. Thus, then, figures with different intimations set forth the fulness and purity of the grace of Christ. Whatever be the sweetness or the fragrance of the rose, the lily, or the ointment, all do but inadequately and faintly represent the fulness and sweetness of the Saviour's grace.

And the lily, likewise, is beautiful; and yet its beauty has a different character from that of the rose. Christ is "altogether lovely." Often in men eminent for one excellence we see a remarkable failing in some respect; but in Christ, my brethren, there is every excellence, and no failing whatever. He was alike distinguished by the stronger and the softer virtues—by energy and

gentleness; by a boldness that would not quail before the most virulent of enemies, and by a tenderness that would stoop to bind up the bruised reed. How admirable this blending of excellencies, rarely found in combination! How attractive this "Lily of the valleys"—also "the Rose of Sharon!"

Do ye all greatly admire Jesus Christ, as revealed in Scripture, in the dignity of His person, both God and Man—in the excellence of His character, perfect God and perfect Man—in the fulness of His grace, "able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him?" "What think ye of Christ?" How do ye regard this beautiful "Rose," and this lovely "Lily," as I hold each before you in the preaching of the Gospel this evening?

III. But this leads us to our third and last consideration. We have regarded Christ as "the Rose of Sharon," and again, Christ as "the Lily of the valleys:" let us now consider Christ to bloom here in our own garden, and also in the desert and the waste waiting for the culture of our Colonial Church Society.

Do ye all possess a home garden? Some of you, perhaps, will say, 'We wish we did; we would go and plant there the rose and the lily to remind us of "the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys."' That might be well; but you might have such a garden, and yet never think of Christ. Many have houses and gardens, and other things which in Scripture are symbols of Christ, who never think of Christ. But ye all have a home garden, in which ye may see "the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys" flourish. 'How can that be,' says one, 'when I am sure that I have no garden at all?' Yes, you have. Your soul may be a garden of the Lord, filled with choice and pleasant plants, and among them the chief flower shall be "the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys." Do ye now understand? You may have Christ to dwell in your hearts by faith. If you pray God to make you truly penitent for your sins, humble-minded and contrite, then you have the soil prepared for "the Lily of the valleys." "A broken and a contrite heart our God will not despise." Oh! see earnestly to this. I pray God that none of you may prove impenitent, careless, hardened sinners. Think often and earnestly of the love of God, and let that lead you to repentance. Meditate much and frequently on the sufferings of Christ, endured for your sins. That view will break even a heart of stone. Pray fervently for the Holy Spirit to give you repentance unto life. Entreat the Saviour to condescend, as "the Lily of the valleys," to come and dwell graciously in your hearts; but beg Him also to be to you "the Rose of Sharon." Forget not that blood-stained, crimson hue, reminding you of the atoning blood. Have faith in Christ crucified for you. Let others glory in what they will—let your glory be always in His cross. Oh! that ye may all admire and love, in some worthy manner, the adorable Redeemer. There are who have no taste for flowers. It seems strange that they should hardly deign to glance at what are excellently called "the smiles of God's love;" but it is stranger still, that some have no taste to admire the excellencies of Christ, in whom are all beauties, moral, spiritual and Divine, wonderfully blended.

Let the young people in the congregation learn to love Him in early life. Pray, my beloved young friends, that ye may know more and more of Him the longer ye are permitted to live. Ye can never, never on earth know all His worth. His "love passeth knowledge." And remember the fragrance of the rose and the lily. Let all your works, words, and thoughts speak of Christ. Let all be done in faith. Let your words modestly testify of Him on all due

occasions. Let your prayers ascend, like incense, breathing the fragrance of His name. And pray that ye may all resemble Christ. We would see the youth in our different congregations as the rose-buds of the Rose of Sharon, so livingly united to Christ that ye may evidently begin to resemble Him. This must be through His Spirit's grace, earnestly sought in prayer. We would see you, like Him, living in purity and lowliness. Oh ! shun the opposite vices. Have quite a dread of the impurity which so often contaminates and cankers the opening bud of youth ; and pray the lowly Saviour to preserve you from the pride which grows like a rank ugly weed, in place of the humility which should adorn early life.

You see, then, how you are to seek to have " the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys " blooming and flourishing in your own gardens. But this is to be said to all—not only to the young in the congregation. Every one among us has a soul to be cultivated, for God or for the world, for Christ or the devil. It is vain to say, we will not have it cultivated at all ; so saying, and acting accordingly, you would at once leave it in the hands of the enemy, to sow all tares, to plant all noxious weeds, to poison the soil, and to bring it and keep it under the withering curse of God. But let all cultivate their souls for God. " Ye are God's husbandry." Your soul should be " as a watered garden ; " let each one aim to have his own garden in perfect order, without a weed. Imitate one who was asked by a friend, how she continued to keep her garden so remarkably free from weeds : " I make it a rule," she said, " never to take a turn in it, but I try to root up if it be but one weed." Oh ! let us seek, by daily culture, through the Spirit's grace, to mortify all sin, to correct every evil habit, to subdue all bad tempers, to " grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Let us seek that our knowledge of Him be influential, transforming, conforming, perfecting us more and more after His example ; while all our dependence from first to last is upon His blood-stained cross, His atoning sacrifice, His spotless righteousness, His perfect mediation.

How is it, I again ask, with your own garden ? I must press the point. Much as I desire to help the Colonial Church Society this evening, much more do I desire to help you. It would grieve me, were you so to help that Society as to have to say hereafter—" They made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept ; " ' I helped to cultivate gardens in the distant colonies, but my own garden at home is all wild and waste.' If so with you, your first duty is at home, with yourselves and with your own souls. Oh ! that I could persuade—but while I say it I check myself ; how can I persuade ?—it must be the Spirit of God effectually persuading—oh ! that it may be so !—if it were but one among you, to begin to attend to earnest personal religion ! Nothing but that will serve ; because that only is true religion, which through the Holy Spirit blessing the Gospel of Christ binds the heart to God, by the cords of His love, the motives of His Gospel, and the grace of Christ.

Is Christ, then, I would ask with all earnestness, precious to you ? Is " the Rose of Sharon " quite conspicuous in your garden ; to be discernible there as " the Lily of the valleys ? " Is the fragrance of His grace manifested in you ? Have ye all the mind of Christ in you ? Here comes a test which will try. What think ye of efforts to evangelise our colonies ? Can we not gather the mind of Christ upon this ? Surely, His general direction to preach the Gospel throughout all the world and to every creature is quite enough. It cannot mean throughout the world, excepting so large a part of the world as is now under

our own country's government, and therefore the most accessible, the safest for residence, and having also the strongest of claims—that of children on a parent, asking bread, even the Bread of life: not surely, therefore, to be put off with a stone. There also is the mind of Christ. He would, we know, have parents teach their children, and suffer them to come unto Him. And here is the first of duties of a nation towards her children in the colonies. And did He not send Jewish Christians to evangelise all men everywhere, and first of all their own countrymen in every place? Is there here, again, no plain intimation for the mind that tries to catch intimations of the mind of Christ—for the guidance of English Christians in regard to their own brethren in the colonies?

But the duty, I would assume, is admitted. Let us think, then, with some serious consideration, on the field to be cultivated. Leaving out for the time present the heathen world at large, and the Jews, with their ancient and modern claims from history and from prophecy, and our home field in the British Isles—all most important, all needing culture, all claiming help; let us now try and concentrate our thought on the colonies of our great empire, extending, if we include India and all the dependencies of our empire, over eight millions of square miles, and containing one hundred and fifty millions of human beings, being one-sixth portion of the habitable globe and of the entire human race. As to religion, they include men of all religions—Mahometans, Romanists, Protestants, infidels, and persons of no religion at all. But if we limit our view to those more commonly called our colonists, the settlers of British extraction, who speak our own language and cherish the habits and manners of our father-land, we thus have before us a population of four millions of chiefly nominal Christians, claiming our aid. And their number is annually increasing. The tide of emigration carried, in the year 1847, nearly three hundred thousand of our countrymen to our colonies; in 1848, two hundred and fifty thousand more; and an equal, or still larger number, are proceeding as this year advances. And thus there is a prospect, that in a few short years these four millions will be doubled, yea, trebled. How soon, as to natural cultivation, will many a "wilderness blossom as the rose," and the desert become a garden!

But how will it be as to spiritual things? Ah! how is it now? Let us think of the spiritual destitution of the colonies. On this subject it seems hard to fix the public attention. It is easy to see the duty of this Christian country to provide that every body of emigrants and settlers throughout our colonies shall have the means of grace. They should themselves, of course, contribute according to their ability for procuring these means; but at the first, while their own means are inadequate, the country sending them forth, and not only through their removal finding greater space for its own struggling population at home, but also gathering strength from the growing prosperity of its colonies, should itself, and that on the highest Christian grounds, supply the deficiency. All engaged in commerce in our colonies, together with all enjoying Christian privileges at home, should combine their endeavours to help to plant "the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys" in all the plains and in all the valleys occupied by our colonists. But has it been so? In our forty colonies, of three millions of square miles, there are only about five hundred clergymen of our church, and, it may be, about five hundred other ministers, of different Protestant denominations. But what—"what are these among so many?" Often, one minister has to expatiate over from one to two hundred miles—to

go twenty-five miles or more in one direction, to visit a sick person, and then as soon as he returns to his station, to go five-and-twenty or more miles in another direction, for the same purpose. Numbers of persons in our colonies never see a minister, nor hear the sound of the church-going bell. In one colony, for instance—that of New Brunswick—there are fifty-seven out of eighty parishes, without a resident minister. The effects are as might be expected. “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame :” a colony left to itself bringeth the mother country to shame. Our colonies, in their moral and religious state, are our country’s shame. We could give you facts which would horrify, of the prevalence of such crimes, especially in the convict colonies, as disgrace human nature. In better cases, there grows an indifference to the things of God, a coldness and deadness of spirit, which form a suitable soil for all the weeds and corruptions of our fallen nature. And in the best cases it is most difficult to keep alive religious principle, amidst such a dearth and destitution of the means of grace. How would it be with ourselves, were we in like circumstances? If now we complain of ourselves,—if now, amidst our Sabbaths, and churches, and ministers and abundant means of grace, we at times languish—if our rose-buds and our lilies often want watering—how would it be with us there, in those dry and barren fields? How must it be, then, with those who are there? Let us feel for them, and do as we would be done by. For we see, brethren, the mind of Christ—we observe the need that exists: then let us help to carry out that mind, and let us seek to supply that need.

And for this purpose, most cordially do I recommend to you the Colonial Church Society, as the most suitable instrument and means. The total number of its agents now cultivating in its fields is forty-three, of whom seven are clergymen. It has from fifty to sixty day-schools and Sunday schools, in which children are being trained “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” It has had many interesting proofs of the blessing of God on its labours. There are fields at this time very especially inviting the Society’s culture. In Port Philip and South Australia, the Bishops of Melbourne and Adelaide would gladly employ as many labourers as the Society could send them; so, in the two Canadas there are special calls for this Society; also, at the Cape of Good Hope; among the Indo-Britons at Calcutta—(this is the special request of the Archdeacon, your present esteemed and earnest minister); and among British residents in the South of Spain—the special request of the Bishop of Gibraltar. The funds of the Society have been increasing, during this year of trial, to the amount of £450; but it needs large accessions to its funds, to enable it more adequately to do the work needing to be done by such instrumentality. You who hear its claims this evening, come, help it, if you will—not only by a liberal collection at the door, which I earnestly hope and entreat that you will give, but also by becoming, if you are not already and if you have the means, its regular supporters by annual subscriptions; and further still, (and very thankful should I be if any, or if many, would attend to this suggestion,) by speaking of the Society to your friends, circulating its papers, and soliciting from any of them who may be disposed to give, subscriptions or donations.

It is, then, in such ways, that a young Society like this might be made to grow with a very vigorous growth. If you would only try, I could almost promise, that by taking up the Society’s cause earnestly, making it your personal concern, each trying to do all you could for it,—you must obtain one hundred new subscriptions between this day and the second Tuesday in May, the day of the Society’s Annual Meeting. If each one who feels the value of

Christ to his or her soul, would seriously study in the light of Scripture the spiritual needs of the Colonies, and make it matter of prayer, as Christ Himself directed, that the "Lord of the harvest" would raise up more labourers; and if that praying person would then go forth from the closet, and speak and act for the Society accordingly, then I am well persuaded that it would be found quite practicable and easy to help this important cause to, and even beyond the extent I have now mentioned.

Think ye, that thus ye would impoverish yourselves? Do we not gain by giving, and increase by scattering, in the Church of Christ? Will your own roses bloom the less sweetly, if you give away slips to beautify a neighbour's garden, just being fenced in from the wilds? or will your own lilies be at all the less fragrant, if ye send offsets to other valleys? Nay, is not Christ found and felt more precious to ourselves, as we discover and make known more and more the sufficiency of His grace, for ourselves and for others? Is it no pleasant thought, that while we are enjoying Christian privileges in all their richness at home, our countrymen abroad are, in many a once neglected spot, joining in the same prayers, and listening with delight to the same Gospel? And will not they, receiving it as you do, rejoice to extend it as you do, and they to whom it is extended extend it still further?—and thus as population increases, further and further in the wilderness our sweet "Rose of Sharon" and our lovely "Lily of the valleys" will, it is to be hoped, be found in the remotest regions, supplanting the thorn and the briar, and diffusing the fragrance of heaven on the once desert or murky air.

Dear brethren, life and opportunity are fast passing away. Excuse one personal allusion. It was but yesterday that I suddenly received a summons to stand and watch by the death-bed of one very near and dear to me. This might have formed an apology for not fulfilling my present engagement, and you must have received it; but when I thought of the passage—"Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Gospel," I could not, if I felt disposed, think of such an apology. Life is indeed fast passing away with us all, we have no time for disputing on minor matters; souls are perishing, Christ is able and willing to save; let us do what we can, while we can, to make Christ known. Then let us prepare ourselves and aim to prepare all we can, for the paradise of God, where we shall see our own "Rose of Sharon," and our precious "Lily of the valleys," surrounded with all the plants of righteousness, "the planting of the Lord," all blooming with beauty never fading, and with a fragrance never failing. Meanwhile, let us all enter into the spirit of a certain poet of our own, who himself loved the garden, with its roses and its lilies, but who loved far more "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and who longed for others to love Him also; let us enter into his missionary mind, expressed at a time when our modern missions were in their earliest infancy.

"God gives the Word, the preachers throng around,
Live from His lips, and spread the glorious sound.
That sound bespeaks salvation on her way,
The trumpet of a life-restoring day;
'Tis heard where England's Eastern glory shines,
And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines.
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth
Her sons to pour it on the farthest north;
Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
In icy plains, and in eternal snows."

THE HEART CLAIMED.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M.A.,

PREACHED IN THE EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, GRAY'S INN ROAD,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 26, 1849.

Before making a Collection in Behalf of the Royal General Annuity Society.

"My son, give me thine heart."—Proverbs xxiii. 26.

To demand the heart, is to demand the greatest thing we have to give. He that giveth that one thing, in giving it gives everything he hath. Wealth cannot purchase it, force cannot take possession of it; it must be freely yielded, or it can never be obtained. There are many claimants for the boon; the world says, 'Give it to me;' the flesh says, 'Surrender it to my charge;' the devil says, 'Let it be mine;' but amidst these clamorous claims there is heard a "still small voice" of inexpressible majesty and most winning persuasiveness, which says, "My son, give *Me* thine heart." It is the voice of Him who made us—of Him who sustains us—of Him who gave us that heart, and everything we have, but our corruption—of Him who redeemed us with the blood of His own precious heart.

It is very touchingly recorded of the Macedonian church, when the apostle sought their alms on behalf of their suffering brethren at Jerusalem, that they not only gave from the depth of their poverty, but that they gave beyond the apostle's hope or expectation, in that they first gave their own selves to the Lord, and then to His ministers and church, according to the will of God. And, beloved brethren, we have not come to-night to ask your alms, so much as to ask yourselves. "We seek not yours, but you;" and in the name of Him whose ambassador I am, I desire to plead with you, "as though God did beseech you by us, praying you in Christ's stead," yield yourselves, by yielding your hearts to God.

The demand, therefore,—the reasonableness of the demand, the indispensable-ness of the demand, and the blessedness of the demand, will engage our earnest attention. May the Spirit of God attend, in His demonstration and power, that He may draw "with cords of love and with bands of a man," every alienated heart back to God, through Christ.

I. The demand—that we may understand it.

When God asks the heart, He asks everything; for the heart is the mainspring of the intellectual and moral machinery in that marvellous being, man; so that as the streams are all of the same kind with the fountain, and as the branch and the fruit are of the same nature with the root, so "out of the heart are the issues of life." We may give much, or rather we may seem to give much to God, whilst we give not this supreme thing. There may be much devotedness of the under-

standing to the study of His word, there may be much of apparent zeal and earnestness in the ceremonies of His religion,—there may be much of self-denial and external submission; yea, a man may give to God occasional emotions; there may be strong excitements, now of fear, now of joy, now of gratitude, now of reverence, now of seeming love; and yet the heart may be reserved.

When God asks the heart, He asks the whole heart. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And the promise of God to His people is—"I will give them one heart;" and that one heart shall be His own,—all concentrated upon God; the fear, the hope, the love, the joy, the desire, the jealousy, the delight, all centring in God through Christ; so that we may say, without hypocrisy and without dissimulation—"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee." 'Anything but Thine anger, and everything with Thy love; Thy favour is better to me than life, and Thy anger more to me than death.' Yea, so supremely must we love God in Christ, that we must in comparison hate father and mother, and sister and brother, and even life itself. This, and nothing short of this, is to give the heart to God. There may be—there will be—still struggling affections and desires, seeking to gain the ascendancy over the love of God within us; but there can be no tolerated rival, no antagonistic affection, cherished within—or else the heart is not dedicated to God. The surrender must be entire; it must be once and for ever; we must yield the whole inner man up to God in Christ Jesus.

Seemeth this, then, a hard demand—an exorbitant demand—an unreasonable demand? It were in any but One, and that one the God and Father of us all. But what can be more reasonable than to yield your heart to Him? He made it; it was He that formed it for Himself; he capacitated it with desires and with capabilities of fruition that none but Himself can fill; and though the heart, to look into it, seems a very small and narrow thing, yet hath it depths which all the drops we can gather from the broken cisterns of creature-good cannot fill,—a yearning thirst, which all earth's polluted streams can never slake. The fountain of living water alone can assuage its thirst and satiate its desires. Give the heart of man anything and everything but God, and it is still a craving, restless, feverish thing—always in pursuit, never in possession—always in hope, never in fruition. But He who made the heart, with such wondrous capacities, designed to fill it with all His fulness, and to make it a temple where He would condescend to dwell for ever.

To give the heart to God, therefore, is to give it for the purpose for which it was framed. What more reasonable, then, than to give it to Him who alone is infinitely perfect? Whatever else we love supremely, we make an idol; and, as an idol, it debases us. But to love God with all our powers, is to have a God and not an idol; and it elevates, it expands, it purifies, it etherializes a man. He that loves low and little things becomes himself degraded and narrowed, and bound down to the dust; but he that loves great and ennobling things becomes himself ennobled. If it be so with the poor things that we call great and noble on earth, what must it be when our love is supremely set upon Him who is the fountain of all beauty and the model of all perfection—whom to be like is to be perfect?

And can anything be more reasonable than to give the heart to God, when God hath given the Son of His own heart for us? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His only begotten Son to be the

propitiation for our sins." "If any man," therefore, "love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." But what is that ingratitude, which makes no return for love so free, so boundless, so incomprehensible? If we behold the everlasting Word coming forth from the bosom of His Father, "made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law;"—if we trace His pilgrimage of sorrow and of agony from the manger to the garden, from the garden to the cross, from the cross to the sepulchre,—if we behold all the love that He poured forth throughout the course of His pilgrimage, and that burst from His heart, as "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness;" "by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension," are we not constrained to yield to Him the one thing that He asks from us, wretched and miserable sinners,—the heart for which He condescended to die?

To keep back the heart from Christ, therefore, is to rob Him of the purchase of His blood, is to keep from Him all that He sought, and all that we have to give Him in return. Is it, then, unreasonable that He alone should demand that heart whose claim to it is so clear, and whose appeal for it is so pathetic, and who bought it at such a price, as eternity can never compute? To deprive Him of the heart is the grossest injustice and the most fearful baseness.

II. But, brethren, if it be reasonable to give the heart to God—so reasonable that there is nothing more irrational in the universe than to withhold it from Him, it is no less indispensable that we surrender it to Him. Strange and monstrous it is, that man should hesitate to yield his heart to his Creator and Redeemer. And yet "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and the heart naturally is most repugnant to the sway and to the Spirit of God; so that men will give everything rather than their hearts. They will give their time, and their wealth, and their outward observances, and their pilgrimages, and their penances, and their fastings, and their lacerations of the flesh; they will "give all that they have to feed the poor, and their body to be burned;" rather than yield their heart to God. How much religion is there that is heartless! how much that is fair to the eye of man, but before God only the whitewash of the sepulchre, disgusting and loathsome within! How much is there which men look upon in the outward appearance and it is lovely, but which God, who searcheth the heart, looks upon, and it is utterly vile! And yet, disguise it from ourselves as we may, and seek to evade it as we please, the command of God is still reiterated, and from man's first dawn of reason to his last conscious hour, the one indefeasible claim of our Creator, Redeemer, and Judge is, "Give Me thine heart." That withholden, all is withholden; that surrendered, all is bestowed; without it "the body given to be burned, and all the goods given to feed the poor," is nothing; with it the "cup of cold water," bestowed out of love to Jesus, to one of his poor disciples, "shall in no wise lose its reward;" the widow's mite cast into the treasury from such a motive, is valued above all the riches of the noble.

It is love, love to God which gives its sterling reality to all religion. It is the beautiful and distinctive characteristic of Christianity, that it is the religion of the heart, because it is a religion of love. All false religions, all religions that caricature the true, as for instance, in darkest development in the Romish apostacy, appeal to fear, and not to love, would compel man to the drudgery of obedience by the goad of terror; but Christianity, in its purity and simplicity, draws man by the magnet of love; "We love Him, because He first loved us;" and whatever disguises

and masks the love of God to man in Christ, mars and renders ineffectual the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. And as the religion of Jesus is founded on love, so it must have love in the heart of man for its master motive. "Perfect love casteth out fear;" and in proportion as a man hath perfect love, he will serve God with liberty of heart and with devotedness of spirit and of life.

We may make it clear to the commonest mind, how essential is love to the service of God. Is there a father or a mother that hearkens to us, who has a child dear to him as his own life—a son that he has brought up with thrilling solicitude and tenderest watchfulness; for whose sake he has undergone hardship and toil, and felt them not to be hardship and toil, because of love to his son—a son for whom he has been willing to make every sacrifice, and to whom he has dedicated his fondest and his most yearning attention? Does that son externally gratify his father's affection, and appear to return and requite it? Is he assiduous in his attention, prompt in his obedience, and apparently all that a father's heart could wish? Does that father repose fondly on his child's supposed affection, and delight in his child's constant obedience? But does he haplessly discover that all the while his child is acting the dissembler with his fond father; that all his external duty and obedience is only disguise put on to deceive his father; that some selfish or sinister motive is actuating him all the while; that it is his own sordid interest which he has in view—will the father any longer rest in fond satisfaction with his child's obedience? I trow not. The whole is marred; it becomes repulsive; it does not delight, it pains, because it is hollow, because it is heartless. The father will feel, 'I have given my heart to my child, I want my child's heart in return; I love him, he must love me; I cannot be mocked with a shadow, I want the substance and reality. It is not affection, and therefore it is nothing to me; I could bribe it, I could buy it from a slave; but I want it to gush forth spontaneously from my child.' God sees the heart, and therefore He knows whether it is the form of godliness without the power that would mock Him, or whether it is the delightful Spirit of adoption in the heart which leads the believer to cry, "Abba, Father," and to count His service perfect freedom. If, therefore, an earthly father would not be content with a semblance of devotedness, how shall the Father of our spirits be content with it? And if you that are evil expect a return of your affection from your child, must not God expect a return from you? Let every father, then, judge in this controversy, and see whether the heart be not essential in the service of God—so essential, that without it our most studied obedience is rather studied insult to Him that searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and requireth truth in the inward parts. Beware of it, brethren, that your religion prove not "a refuge of lies" at the last; beware of it, that you are not building up a splendid fabric, as you fancy, to shelter you in the tempest of the great day, and you find that it was raised upon the sand, and will become in ruins at the last, because you gave not your heart first, and above all, to the God who gave His Son for you.

III. But, brethren, if the demand be thus reasonable and indispensable, is it less blessed to man? What does God desire and seek after in asking the heart? Does He need it? Is it worthy of Him? Is it indeed so precious that He should thus crave it, yea, that He should send His own Son to purchase it with His blood, and send His own Spirit to strive with the sinner, that the sinner may be made willing to yield it up to Him, that He should command His ambassadors to go forth and entreat His alienated offspring to give their hearts to Him? No, there is nothing in the heart but what is fitted to excite His loathing, and His displeasure, and His

utter detestation, save as He manifests His mercy that, where misery and ruin are, delights to rescue and restore. He wants the heart for our sakes rather than His own, save as He magnifies His glory in making monuments of His grace out of such ruins as we are. He asks the heart that He may make it holy, that He may make it happy, that He may cleanse the cage from its unclean birds, that the Dove of heaven may again dwell there, that He may clear the wilderness of the thorn, and the briar, and the thistle, that He may plant there "the shittah tree, the myrtle tree, and the box tree together." He asks the heart, that He may make it a temple for Himself, and shed abroad in it all His beauty and all His blessedness, increasing more and more through everlasting ages.

What so blessed as to give the heart to God! For the more we love Him, the more we shall find Him to be worthy of our love. Give your heart to the best and the purest of your fellows, and you give it after all to a poor imperfect being. The more narrowly you watch him, the more intimately you know him; the more you see him in all the intricacies of his life, the more you discover of his imperfection and infirmity; and how often the heart finds the idol on which it has doted to be a bruised reed, which afterwards pierces to the core! But never, if we love the Saviour as "the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely," shall we find in Him "spot, or blemish, or any such thing." The more our hearts are enlarged, so as to comprehend the height and depth of His love, the more shall we find our whole soul satisfied; for expectation infinite will ever furnish us with an enlarging field for discovery, and for adoring admiration, and gratitude, and ecstacy. To know Him more and love Him more, will occupy a whole eternity.

And then, brethren, to be sure that our love is returned, is not this to be blessed? Even in this world of sorrow and imperfection, there is nothing sweeter, so far as earth can give enjoyment, than a well-placed and fully-returned affection. How intimate and endearing the affection between a father and child—between husband and wife—between friend and disinterested friend! To love, and to know that we are beloved—to interchange the sweet reciprocities of affection,—this, indeed, is one of earth's sweetest flowers, though it be a wild flower except it be grown in the garden of grace. And if there be such sweetness in reciprocity of affection between man and man, what must be the sweetness and fruition that flow from reciprocity of affection between us ransomed sinners and the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,"—who condescends to call them that love Him friends, and to tell them all things, whatsoever the Father hath revealed to Him! Yes, He returns our love. We are assured of it; for we should never have loved Him, if He had not "first loved us." He set His love upon us when we had no love to Him; He "drew us with cords of love and bands of a man;" when we were far off from Him He brought us nigh, through His own free grace and sovereign love; and therefore, if we love Him in return, we are assured, we are guaranteed of His antecedent love to us. And the more we love Him, the more we ascertain of His love to us; and thus there is a blessed reaction; we love Him more and more, and we more and more apprehend His love to us; so that "being rooted and grounded in love, we are able to comprehend what is the length and breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God." And when Christ's love is assured to us, then all things are assured to us,—“whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.” “We know that all things work together for good

to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." Yea, and that love can never be rent from us: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, are able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Is not this, then, blessedness—blessedness while we live, blessedness when we die, and blessedness when we wake up in His likeness, and are for ever satisfied?

Then, too, it is, that religion becomes our kindred element. Without love, religion is a task, and a toil, and a drudgery—an irksome work that the slave performs, goaded by conscience or impelled by self-righteousness; but when we love Him, then we serve Him not because we must, as because we will,—not of constraint, but of choice. Every duty is endeared, every yoke is lightened, every burden is relieved, when God fills the heart. Look at this in earthly things. When the child that delights in an aged father, watches him by day, and takes no rest in her care by night—smoothes his pillow, bears with his complainings, anticipates every wish, watches every glance of his eye—does she deem it a toilsome task? Does she wish it were at an end? Her heart trembles at the thought. To the hireling it would be a task; but doing it from love, it is the source to her of sweetest delight. So will it be in the service of God; the commandments which are grievous to the sinner, are not grievous to the saint—the requirements which men naturally recoil from, the child of God counts his greatest privilege and enjoyment. To serve God is his heaven begun; to serve Him as His angels do will be his heaven complete. Sorrow, too, loses its bitterness, when it is received from the hand of love; when we see that the hand which smites us is the hand that was wounded for us, and when we hear amid the storm and darkness a voice which says, "It is I, be not afraid," we can kiss the hand that wields the rod, and welcome the storm and the darkness that bring the Saviour nearer to us. With us in the lion's den, as with Daniel, it becomes "the house of God and the gate of heaven;" with us in the fiery furnace, as with the children in captivity, we can sing praises in the flames, and rejoice even in the torture; even as the martyr who said on his dying bed,—“You want a miracle; behold one. These flames are to me as a bed of roses.” So did the love of his Saviour fill his soul, that the Spirit of God lifted him up above the pains of his body; heaven began, and the flames were to him but as the prophet's chariot of fire that bore him triumphantly to his God.

Brethren, what a blessed thing to give the heart to God! What an unspeakable blessing, that God will accept it at our hand! Are there those that have hearkened to the word of His grace, who are conscious that their hearts are not given to God? A little reflection must convince many that this is their sad state, for what do they think about most? What do they hope most? What do they desire most? For what do they study most? What are they most absorbed in pursuing? Is it Christ, or is it self? Is it earth, or is it heaven? And if, brethren, you have a direct and positive conviction that your heart is not the Lord's, we would conjure you, as by all that is solemn in authority, so by all that is dear to you in hope, and all that is powerful in persuasion, never rest till your heart is given to God. You are a miserable creature till that is done. Better for you that you had not been born, or had been born anything but a mortal big with immortality, and that immortality to be in exile and alienation towards God your Saviour.

Beloved brethren, you will ask, 'How can we give the heart to God, when it is

“deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?” We answer, Never, except God Himself take that heart, and make it willing in the day of His power; but you can cry out to God, that He would send down His Spirit into that stony heart, to change it into a heart of flesh; you can cry out to God, that He would help you to repent and to believe; and above all, ask Him for the precious gift of faith—for it is faith that works by love. You will never love God by labouring to set yourselves to love Him; you must learn to love Him, by learning to apprehend His love in Christ to you. When condemned, and ruined, and helpless, and wretched, and miserable, and “poor, and blind, and naked,” you know your intense need of a Saviour, and are led to discern the all-sufficiency of Christ to meet your need—that He is “made unto you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” when you are led to know and believe the love that God hath towards a penitent in Christ,—then His love will kindle yours; then the love of God will dislodge the pride and the distrust which create the enmity that is so rife in every unrenewed heart; but nothing less than this will do it.

Beloved brethren, and do you love God, as you humbly hope? Oh! blush for shame that you do not love Him more! Why should the poor vain things that sparkle and expire, that look fair but only deceive, so often divide and distract your affections? Ask God to teach your heart to fear and love His name; seek to give Him an undivided heart. It is the way to be happy here, no less than to be meet for happiness hereafter. If you loved God more, you would have more “peace and joy in believing;” you would have the fear that “hath torment,” and which sometimes visits and disturbs you, more than ever cast out; you would more “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” and taste on earth the first-fruits of the harvest of blessedness that awaits you above. Oh! that the Spirit of God may “shed abroad in our hearts the love of His name;” that we may not merely have some scanty drops, but be “filled with the fulness” of the love of God! for we are not straitened in Him, we are straitened in our own unbelief, in our own carnal and narrow minds.

Brethren, and if you give your heart to God, the rest will follow. Then the best of your time and thoughts, the best of your property, and the best of your lives will all be consecrated to Him; your daily business, whatever it may be, the humblest or the highest, will all be done for God; “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,” your study will be to do all for His glory.

“What shall I render to my God,
For all His gifts to me?”

will be the habitual sentiment of your inmost souls; and therefore you will deny yourselves, to have more to give to others, for His own name's sake. You will argue, ‘If God so loved me, I ought to love others; if God so sacrificed for me, I ought to sacrifice for others.’ Therefore, brethren, we ask you first, to give your hearts to God, and then, for God's sake, to give as He disposes and enables you to the poor and distressed among your fellows, some of whom have been reduced from affluence to deep necessity, and to whom dependence is bitter, because they have not been accustomed and inured to it; and this reverse frequently happening at a time when they are least able to bear it, when hoar hairs are upon their heads, and shadows are gathering around. An annuity, small, but sufficient for such, is surely a beautiful and a blessed purpose of Christian charity. This Institution for which we plead has dealt relief to many who once knew affluence, and who doubtless often stretched forth the hand of succour to others. It may be that you, or your

children, or your children's children, may become in the revolutions of Providence to be even as these. Let none of us "hide ourselves from our own flesh, but remember those that are bound, as bound with them," as though the chain which circles their arm chafed ours, "and those that suffer adversity," as ourselves likely to drink the same cup. And if so, will it not sweeten our lot to recollect that in our prosperity we did not forget God, nor those for whom God charged us that "as we have opportunity" we should "do good unto all, but especially to them of the household of faith?"

If, therefore, brethren, the calls on your Christian charity be manifold, what are they to the claims of God upon your heart and all that you have? Set not aside, therefore, His pre-eminent claim; for it is not so much for the sake of these poor annuitants that we ask your aid, so much as for the sake of Him "who though He was rich became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich." Let the heart, then, be consecrated to Him; and then bestow, not grudgingly or of necessity, but as every man is disposed in his heart, for "God loveth a cheerful giver." The heart given, cheerfully will the hand obey the heart consecrated to the God who made it.

MISSIONARY LOVE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. JOHN HARDING, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET,
ON MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 30, 1849.

The Annual Sermon for the Church Missionary Society.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."—1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

THE dispensation of the Gospel is rightly designated "an economy of grace." In every part it is a development of grace; for not only, when we search into its origin, are we conducted back to a purpose of mercy, framed before the world began—not only, in the redemption which it proclaims, do we witness a love that "passeth knowledge," and in the sanctification which it secures, the fruit of that love "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost;" not only is that eternal life which consummates the grand design "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" but when we go more into details, and observe the methods of the Divine economy, as seen in the superintendence of the church and as attested in the experience of every believer, how forcibly are we struck with the constantly recurring illustrations of one great pervading principle, and constrained to feel that "grace for grace" may well be written as the motto of the whole.

Of these manifold illustrations of grace, however, we recognise one of the most important, in a certain property which it has pleased God shall attach to whatever acts of obedience to Himself He prompts His children to perform. We allude to a peculiar influence—a reflex influence—which attends those acts, and which goes immediately to advance the doers of them still further in the ways of godliness. Those dispositions which the Holy Spirit teaches the Lord's people to cultivate, and the deeds which He enables them to execute, are all made to have a reaction on themselves—promoting directly their greater conformity to the Divine will. So that all holy and charitable works, done under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, are themselves replete with seeds of blessing for the Christian man's own soul, and minister to the augmentation of his personal sanctity. Grace thus reproduces itself, if we may so speak—fulfilling our Lord's declaration, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly."

Now the passage which we have chosen for our text this evening will be found to contain a remarkable representation on this point. It will be observed, that in the former of the two verses before us St. Paul is expressing his fervent desire for an enlarged manifestation among the Thessalonians of

that love not only towards the church, but also towards all mankind, which ranks so high in the scale of evangelical piety: "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you." And then, in the latter verse of the text, the apostle explains the reason of this solicitude. Why did he pray so earnestly that the Lord would make the love of the Thessalonian Christians to abound? "To the end," he continues, "that He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints." St. Paul felt sure, that just as they advanced in the exercise of true charity towards others, so would they be carried on towards that perfectness, in which, as he believed, they were destined to stand before God in the day of Christ's appearing. The two parts of our text, therefore, taken together, embody that very principle in the dispensations of God with His people to which we have adverted. The grace which is exercised in the actings of obedience, becomes a means of still further advancement; or, to state the truth as it is exhibited in the text, with reference to one particular duty—the reaction of Christian love is progression in holiness; and this whether in the case of the individual believer, or of the church at large.

We propose this subject, dear brethren, for your present consideration, because we regard it as eminently appropriate to this occasion. Our conviction is strong, that nowhere will clearer evidences of the sanctifying power of Christian charity be found, than in connection with that work of love which we are here assembled before God this evening to promote. The history of missions furnishes, as we believe, no ordinary proofs of that reflex influence of which we have spoken, as attending the efforts of the Lord's servants to do His will. Moreover, the period at which, by the good hand of God upon us, we have now arrived in this sacred enterprise, affords peculiar advantages for observing its beneficial effects upon those who have been engaged in the prosecution of it. The experience of fifty years is now before us: let us stand still awhile, to acknowledge what the Lord has wrought for our fathers and for ourselves, in permitting them and us to put our hands to this blessed endeavour. And let us pray, brethren, that the retrospect may stimulate every heart to new exertion, in full assurance that the more abounding our love toward our fellow-men, the larger shall be the recompence of good returned upon our own souls. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

The two chief topics of our discourse, then, will be these: first, the nature of that "love" in which St. Paul desired that his brethren might "abound;" and secondly, the sanctifying result which he anticipated from its increase: and we shall view these topics in immediate connection with the missionary cause—concluding with a few reflections in especial reference to our own circumstances at the present time.

I. In the first place, we have to consider the nature of that "love," in which St. Paul desired that his brethren might "abound." "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you."

The apostle's words will be found to suggest three chief characteristics of the principle which he had in view. They are these,—spirituality of intention, unrestrictedness of attachment, progressiveness of operation; and in all

these points we shall be able to trace an exact correspondence between the love which lived in the church of St. Paul's day, and that which now finds its expression in the work of missions.

And first, the love of which the apostle spake was a principle of spiritual intention. This we infer from its declared origin : it came not of man, but of God. "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love." And here, in fact, brethren, lies the rooted difference between Christian love and all inferior emotions. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Carnal minds may have their charity, but it is a charity which looks on men as nothing more than flesh and blood, endowed with certain intellectual faculties ; and therefore, when it has consulted for their physical comfort and for their mental cultivation, it has reached its limit. Devout, yet unenlightened minds will have their charity ; but like their "zeal for God," not being "according to knowledge," it will "go about" to win men from gross immoralities and to make them observant of the forms of godliness ; but beyond this it sees nothing to desire. Now the charity that is born of God will act in correspondence with the mind of God. And how has that mind discovered itself in its dealings with men ? Assuredly, God has not failed to provide for their physical happiness, or for their intellectual improvement, or for their moral amelioration ; but then He embraces all this as the consequence of another and infinitely higher purpose, namely, the restoration of the soul to conscious, peaceful, holy, and eternal union with Himself. Yes, the recovery of that fallen soul to fellowship with God—this, nothing short of this, is the intention of the Divine love. What but this, brethren, was the end of that amazing act of God toward man, the sacrifice of His Son ? Christ hath "suffered," it is written, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." And what but this is the design of His whole revelation of Gospel truth ? "That which we have seen and heard," saith St. John, "declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Now, then, in harmony with this design will be the intention of that love which the Spirit of God implants in the hearts of His people. Such as the fountain is, such will be the streams. It was so in St. Paul's day. The charity of the church was moulded then after the image of God. Its care for man was a care for man's soul. Lower considerations fell into their place, as the necessary accompaniments of this ; but the grand concern of all true Christians for those whom they loved, it was to see them brought to God ; and the common charge of all the members of the church, it was the promotion of each other's fellowship with God. "Toward those that were without," they were taught to "walk with wisdom, their speech being alway with grace ;" while among those within, the exhorting of one another, the admonishing of one another, the comforting of one another, the praying for one another, are mentioned as the habitual tokens of their mutual regard. All their intercourse, all their influence, came under the bias of a new affection—an affection itself begotten of God ; and consequently directed, after the pattern of His love, to bless and save the souls of men.

And is not this precisely the principle in which the work of missions has its origin ? Is it not a principle preeminently spiritual in its intention ; so that while it compensates the physical miseries of men, and their mental debasement, and their moral perversion, and by its humanizing influences is everywhere

ministering to the relief of its illa, lifting the slave and the savage into freedom and civilization, and inviting the children of barbarian ignorance to the enjoyments of literature and science, it looks on all such benefits as incidental indeed to its design, but as immeasurably subordinate to that which is its true mark and end, even the conversion of the heart to God through the attraction of the cross of Christ. Thank God ! such has been the character of our own Society. Civilization has not been its object, although civilization has always followed in its train ; but its one paramount solicitude has been to “ open the eyes ” of men, to “ turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ.” And here lies the identity of missionary zeal amongst ourselves with the love of apostolic times ; and here, too, the token of its heavenly birth—that it “ counts all things loss,” if the soul of man is not brought to God in Christ, sanctified and saved.

The second characteristic of the love which the apostle had in view, we say, is its unrestrictedness of attachment. It suffers no limitation. Commencing with the church, it stays not there, but embraces the world. “ The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men.” The charity which God inspires not only leads His people to care for their brethren in Christ, but it impels them to go forth beyond its circle, and to pity all mankind. Now that such was the love awakened in the church of the apostle’s day, we have sufficient evidence. It is true that a recollection of the situation in which the first Christians stood might lead us to expect among them less of what we perhaps ordinarily mean by missionary exertions than among ourselves. Gathered as they had been from out of the midst of Judaism and Paganism, they saw tens of thousands of yet unevangelised people on every side ; their missionary work, therefore, would naturally partake more of a home character than would be the case with such as, like ourselves, are privileged to dwell in an already christianized land. But it is still exceedingly instructive to observe the energy with which their love to souls began to work. Even in the face of persecution, when the Christians of Jerusalem were “ scattered abroad,” it is recorded of them that they “ went everywhere preaching the Word,” and with such faithfulness that God granted them very large success ; for “ the hand of the Lord,” it is said, “ was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” The Thessalonian converts were no less distinguished by this same activity of spirit. Theirs was a communicative Christianity. The apostle bears them witness : “ From you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.” It is plain that strangers who came into their city could not leave it without hearing through their means of the living and true God. Moreover, we learn that the Christians of the apostle’s day not only acted as witnesses for truth to the Jews and Pagans around them, but that they were wont, according to their ability, to succour those whom God had called to travel to other lands, as preachers of His Word. Thus we find St. Paul writing to the Corinthian Church, and expressing his hope that as their faith increased he should be enlarged by them—enlarged abundantly, to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond them. In like manner, St. John speaks of servants of Christ, who for His name’s sake went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles, and whom their brethren, therefore, ought to receive, that they might thus be fellow-helpers to the truth, in their errand of mercy to the

world. Their love in this way extended far and wide. It was love that would "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Oh! that that love had never waxed cold! For then, brethren, what a contrast to its actual state had the condition of our world presented now! Eighteen hundred years of aggressive faith and charity—what a change would they have wrought on the face of the habitable globe! The Word of our God can never "return to Him void," nor would have done so for that long space of time; and our missionary map then had by this time exhibited a complexion how different from that which now, alas! pains the eye and wounds the heart of all that have any true love to God and man! But the enemy knew well how to keep the world in darkness, by dividing the church and corrupting the faith: dissension first, unhallowed speculation next, and afterward gross and appalling superstition. And to speak of ourselves; when that superstition had been removed, a supervening coldness and formality—these paralysed the Christian body, and froze its very heart of love. And thus it came to pass, that the missionary work had been almost from the very first suspended; the work had comparatively ceased; and now, at this late era in the history of man, we are but (as it were) beginning again the evangelisation of the world—that true evangelisation, we mean, which was commenced in apostolic times; not the annexation of ignorant throngs, at the baptismal font, to the outward communion of the church, but the subduing of the consciences and hearts of men to that "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," which, while it brings salvation, "teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But, blessed be God! the latent spark has been rekindled; the Spirit of the Lord has fanned the flame, and the church of Christ is sending forth her messengers again, to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south—resuming the execution of her Lord's too long forgotten charge, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The yet unbelieving Jew, the idolatrous heathen, the degraded Mahometan, people of every colour and of every clime, are once more the objects of Christian commiseration; and our missions are the proof that the charity of saints is still the same as at the first—a principle of unrestricted interest in the souls of men.

A third characteristic of this principle, as exhibited in the text, is its progressiveness of operation. Let it live and be in healthy action, and that action will be one of advancing power. This the apostle intimates, not only by supplicating for his Thessalonian converts that the Lord would cause their love to be increasing and abounding, but by instancing also his own example. His desire was that they might "abound in love," "even," said he, "as we do toward you." And St. Paul was, indeed, a bright exemplification of his own maxim, "Charity never faileth." He alludes to his feelings toward the church at Thessalonica, and we can trace the fact that during the twelve months which had now elapsed since he preached Christ in that city, his attachment to the souls whom God had given him there had exceedingly strengthened. His personal intercourse with them had been but brief. A few weeks were too long for the enemies of the Gospel to tolerate his presence in the place, and he was forced to fly to the neighbouring town of Berea; thither they pursued him, and when he afterwards proceeded to Athens the rival schools of philosophers united to pour contempt upon his testimony. He passed to Corinth, and there, in the midst of its profligate idolaters and contradicting

Jews, "determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." But, throughout this eventful year, and notwithstanding his continuous succession of fresh labours and trials, the church at Thessalonica gained only a firmer hold on his remembrance. While at Athens he had sent Timothy to visit them, in order that he might "know their faith;" and Timothy had now returned with good tidings of their stedfastness, and apparently it was his report which originated this epistle—an epistle breathing throughout the spirit of one who was indeed willing to have imparted to his fellow men not the Gospel of God only, but his own soul also. It is a beautiful illustration of the fidelity of St. Paul's affection for a people whom he had begotten through the Gospel. "We give thanks to God always for you all," he says, "making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." And again he declares how in all his own affliction and distress he comforted himself with the contemplation of their faith. "For now," said he, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." Nor was it toward the Thessalonians only that St. Paul's attachment exhibited this increase. Epistles which he subsequently wrote to other churches, when prosecuting his ministry in Greece, in Asia Minor, and in Rome, gave evidence that notwithstanding the enlargement of his work, his devotion to his converts was every year becoming more and more fervent. The stream of his charity both deepened and widened at the same time. We think we read it in the growing tenderness and strength of his expressions. Thus in an epistle dated four years after these to the Thessalonians, he addresses the Galatian church, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Two years after to the Corinthians, "Ye are in our hearts," saith he, "to live or die;" four years after to the Philippians, his "dearly beloved and longed for," he writes, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all;" and, then, two years more and he was in bonds at Rome, and testified to Timothy the readiness with which he submitted to every suffering in the service of his brethren. "Therefore," says he, "I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." 'Let my trials multiply, no pain will be too much to bear if only souls are saved.'

So that from first to last, we witness in St. Paul a love that knew no change save that of perpetual increase. His words in the text, therefore, were most truly spoken. His charity proved itself to be a principle of constantly progressive operation.

And may we not recognise, dear brethren, the same progressiveness as a feature of the missionary principle among ourselves, identifying it with the spirit which actuated the apostle of the Gentiles? May we not, for example, point to many of his followers, the preachers of Christ to the heathen at this day, often struggling as they are with external discomfords, with bodily infirmities, with domestic trials; afflicted beyond expression with the spectacle of myriads wholly given to idolatry, and oppressed with horrid scenes of human degradation incessantly before their eyes; frequently standing almost alone the witnesses for truth and holiness in the midst of falsehood and immorality; "wrestling" not with "flesh and blood" only, but with "principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world,"—spirits of wickedness that scarcely seem any longer invisible, where their

presence and their power are such felt realities ; and yet, notwithstanding, all this, as year after year rolls on, how do we see one and another of these dear brethren only growing more devoted to his work, more attached to his charge and more resolved to count not even his life dear unto him if he may but win another soul to Christ. Yes, and when, worn by care and labour in some ungenial climate, they have been compelled to recruit their mind and body by a visit to their native land, how often have we witnessed with joy and gratitude on their behalf the eagerness with which they have hailed a permission to return ; proving that whatever the charms of the country of their birth, the ties of kindred, and the comforts of Christian society here, with them the privilege of "preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" has far outweighed all, and the temporal and spiritual attractions of home have been cheerfully surrendered again, and dearest friends have been once more bidden farewell, that they may go back even to where Satan's seat is, and there renew their strife with him, and with his legions, to deliver the souls that are "ready to be slain." It was much to go thither at the first and to wage that war, but to return to it again demands and proves a principle of stronger growth. We glorify God in them.

But it is not in our brethren abroad alone, that we witness this progressiveness of Christian love, in connection with the missionary cause. We trace it again in the collective mind of the living portion of the church at home, Especially since the opening of India to the messengers of the churches, leading, as that event did, to the formation of the auxiliaries of this Society throughout the kingdom, the spirit of missions has been gathering strength among us continually. Would we could say, brethren, that the advance had corresponded in any due proportion to the obligations of our own position, to the demands of a perishing world, and to the encouragements of a faithful God ! But, nevertheless, it would be ingratitude not to own the power with which the Lord has induced His servants to persevere and prosper in their undertaking, until to Africa and India were successively added Ceylon, New Zealand, the shores of the Mediterranean, and the West Indies ; not to mention other fields, of less magnitude indeed, but not of less importance ; and now at length, while God is cutting asunder those bars of iron which have kept, in all past time, the gates of China closed against His truth, lo ! Christian love is already on the threshold of that prison-house of souls, eager to publish to three hundred and sixty millions of idolaters the "only name whereby they must be saved."

And shall we not once more confess with humble thankfulness those additional tokens of advance which our Jubilee commemoration has so recently brought with it ? Truly that day was a day to be much remembered. Who of us, brethren, will ever forget the solemn, yet gladdening, sensations awakened within us, as we thought, while that morning's light was breaking upon ourselves, that a little band in the far East had already made the first oblation of praise and prayer ; and then that presently our brethren in India had been taking up the strain ; and then from Africa and Egypt there came voices mingling with our own ; our scattered congregations in the West succeeding these ; and finally, the thousands of New Zealand, in full chorus as the day declined, all sending up their loud Amen to that one unbroken tribute of thanksgiving, that for four and twenty hours continuously had been entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Angels never witnessed such a spectacle on earth before ; and if Christian prudence,

taught by observation of human nature, even at the best, warns us against too sanguine an expectation, under circumstances so greatly calculated to excite, still, on the other hand, we may not put from us the cheering facts that are recorded of that festival, now that it is past—the chastened, the devout, the spiritual tone of mind which marked its celebration; the open and earnest confession of pure scriptural truth with which it was accompanied; and the extension of effort by which it has been followed. Surely there is reason to say with confidence, that our Society has gone forward this last year with no faltering step. The charity of Christians among us toward all men has shown a decided increase, and our God has indeed been reviving His work in the midst of these days. To Him, then, let us render the homage of our adoration. Let us praise Him for these proofs, that the love which gave our missions birth, and which sustains them still, is the same progressive principle that animated Christian hearts in apostolic times. And if, dear brethren, you are able, like St. Paul, to trace the expansion of that principle within your own breast; if it is yours to feel personally conscious of a deepening anxiety for the souls of men—a more earnest, more sedulous, self-denying care, to have them saved in Christ for ever, then let your hearts again be raised in thankfulness to heaven for the grace thus given to you of God. For, assuredly, He grants no sign of His goodness more full of blessing to His people, than that increasing and abounding love which links the soul in closer union to Himself. “He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

II. But this reflection leads on our minds to the second portion of our text. We have to notice, now, the sanctifying result which St. Paul anticipated from that increase of love which he invoked upon his brethren in the Lord. “To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

The advancement of their holiness, therefore, was the effect which the apostle felt sure would follow upon the increase of their charity: a result which he sought with exceeding anxiety, because in his mind it was blended with prospects most awful, and with hopes most glorious. Separated, as he had been, from these Thessalonian converts, and not knowing whether he should ever be permitted again to see their face in the flesh, he rejoiced in looking onward to a day when he and they should meet—a day of unspeakable grandeur and gladness, that day when Jesus shall “appear the second time without sin unto salvation,” and when His church being gathered together unto Him, He shall “present it unto Himself a glorious church, without spot, and blameless.” Most ardently desiring, therefore, that every one of the brethren to whom he was writing, might then be “found of their Lord in peace,” the apostle prayed that their hearts might be established in holiness, and, in order to this, that the charity which was in them might abound. And, therefore, we said, the practical truth which St. Paul exhibits here, is this, that the reaction of Christian love must ever be a still further progression in holiness. It is so with individual believers, and it is equally so with the church at large. A striking passage on this point, will be familiar to all our minds, in St. Paul’s fourth chapter to the Ephesians; it forcibly shows the connection between the corresponding growth of love and holiness in Christians individually, and in the church collectively. “Speaking the truth,” says he, “in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ;” that is to say, believing men, maintaining

their profession in a spirit of sincere and active charity toward others, advance personally in union and conformity to Christ their Lord ; "from whom," the apostle then proceeds, "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love ;" in other words, just as each member of the church, advancing in love, grows up into Christ, the body of the church will be obtaining compactness and vigour, and the edification of the whole will be the blessed consequence.

We would invite you, beloved brethren, to consider this truth, then, as it is illustrated in the history of our missionary proceedings.

And in the first place, let us look at the question in its relation to our individual piety. We would ask, in what respect does that love toward all men, which engages us in the work of missions, tend to promote our personal holiness ? And we answer, primarily, that it quickens within us the spirit of prayer.

Yes, the first expression of true pity for a world in peril of destruction, it is prayer. One glance at its millions lying in their heathen state, all ignorant, depraved and hopeless—oh ! how it hastens every child of God at once to his Father's feet, there to pour out his lamentations for lost men, and to implore for them the Divine interposition ! And so the Lord would have it be. How emphatic is that intimation which He gave to His disciples as to the immediate effect which He would have awakened in their minds by the sight of large numbers of their fellow-men waiting for salvation ! "The harvest," He said, "is plenteous, but the labourers are few." What, then, shall His followers do ? Rush at once to the field and thrust in their sickles ? 'Nay,' their Master seems to reply, 'be your first effort that of prayer.' "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send labourers into His harvest." The lesson, brethren, the lesson is for the church in all ages ; and the impulse of every heart that is taught of God coincides with it to this hour. Oh ! the thought of seven hundred millions of our fellow-men covered at this moment with the shadow of death—forty thousand of them day by day passing into a darketernity ! Does it not force us, dear brethren, unceasingly to plead with "the God of the spirits of all flesh," beseeching Him, without delay, to multiply His heralds of salvation, and to let their glad tidings be heard in every land ?

Nor is this all ; but when the men of God's sending have gone forth, and we are fain to follow them with a felt concern and sympathy, how quickly do the claims accumulate in reiterated succession ! From every region of the world, we hear the cry, "Pray for us—pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." And our souls, brethren, are stirred within us to respond to that call ; and thus it is that an interest in missions keeps us continually recurring to the throne of grace. And, moreover, experience soon proves to us that it is this spirit of supplication which is the very life of our missionary cause. It was in this element, as early records show, that our own beloved Society was reared, and in it has lain its strength. The Lord has taught us well that the measure of our power is in the intensity of prayer. He has taught us that the conversion of the heathen is furthered most when the children of God are most importunate with Him for the outpouring of His Spirit on the dark places of the earth. And because of this peculiarity in the work, because of the way in which it brings us before

our God in incessant solicitation on others' behalf, therefore the effect upon ourselves is redundant with blessing. It is the Divine ordinance that intercession for others shall always enrich the suppliant's own soul. The very exercise lifts us into a sphere beyond ourselves. It corrects the selfishness of our nature; it raises us above the world; it keeps us near the throne of God: we breathe the atmosphere of heaven, and a growing elevation of spirit and character must ensue.

Again, the work of missions brings us into conscious co-operation with God himself. "We are labourers together with God," says St. Paul; and the representation is true not of apostles only,—it applies by analogy to every one who takes his part, however humbly or remotely, in that extension of the Gospel in which the apostles were employed. If, indeed, the evangelisation of the world were an adventure of human speculation, then our partnership in it would be with man only; but if the Lord has gone out before us, then when we enlist among the friends of missions we enter into association with none other than the most high God; we are come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty," and faith, *faith* is sensible of this. And hence, as we become more deeply implicated in missionary concerns, the consciousness arises of an alliance with God. All the varying incidents of the work only serve to remind us that it is not our work but His. Every difficulty prompts one appeal: "Arise, O Lord, maintain Thine own cause;" every success elicits one confession: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." The condition of mind thus induced is that of sensible nearness to Him whose name is Holy, and holiness, therefore, is the result. The hearts of many here, we trust, have found it to be so. God grant us, dear brethren, to manifest more of this reflected sanctity; that in all our endeavours for His truth, realising the fact that we are working with Him, we may receive a holier impression from such heavenly intercourse, and be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

And then, once more, the history of missions familiarizes our minds with the operations of the Divine Spirit upon the souls of men; and this contributes in an eminent degree to our own experience in the things of God. The details of missionary intelligence constitute a living picture of the work of grace. The weight of Divine truth; its effect upon the human conscience; the adaptation of the Gospel to the wants of awakened men; the power of the blood of Christ simultaneously to heal, to cleanse, to comfort, and to sanctify; the warfare of the flesh and of the spirit; the devices of the tempter; the triumphs of faith; and, at length, the destruction of the power of death—these, and other kindred verities, how are they brought out in the missionary story, with a simplicity and a force irresistibly arresting! And all this, then, tends at once to our own edification. As we view the development of the Divine work upon others, we are led to ask what correspondence to it may be traced in our own spiritual state; and thus self-examination is promoted, and admonition, and instruction, and consolation are conveyed. Oh! how often in this way has a deficiency been detected, a difficulty solved, a direction gained, an encouragement received, a resolution confirmed, a fear dispelled. It can never be told upon earth to what extent the Lord's people, by reason of their interest in the missionary cause, have thus been blessed. How many of yourselves, brethren, have learned some of your choicest lessons from those truthful sketches which the missionary pen has drawn of the interior of some once

heathen heart, which you have helped to turn to God ! “ For as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man.”

We mention these, then, as some of the features in the missionary cause which render it essentially sanctifying to those whose hearts are given to it. Their acts of fervent intercession ; their consciousness of cooperation with God ; their habit of observing His grace in others, must “ work together for good ” to their own souls. Their faith has wrought in them by love ; and now their love invigorates their faith, and they “ have their fruit unto holiness.”

But now, we remark further, that as it is with Christians individually, so is it with the church collectively ; because the holiness of a community is, in fact, the aggregate result of personal sanctity among its members. As they severally thrive, the whole body is strengthened, and the number is increased of those who love to pray for others, and to work for them with God, and to watch the wonders that He does for the children of men ; the face of society around receives a corresponding complexion, and zeal for God is quickened. A habit of caring for souls is established ; attention is drawn to the spiritual condition of those who are near, as well as of those who are afar off ; home missions—home missions spring up in various forms—the fruit of missions to the world—and the fountain which is pouring forth its streams to fertilize some distant wilderness, overflows with living water to bless its native soil.

Now the religious history of our own country, my brethren, has, surely, exhibited a striking example of this. Let us call to remembrance what was the condition of England at the period just previous to the formation of our own and other kindred societies. What a palsy was resting on the church ! What a depravation of morals had infected all classes of the people ! What fears oppressed the hearts of the loyal and the good that their country would fall a prey to the tyrant-demon of continental infidelity ! Our fathers trembled for the ark of God. “ But when the enemy shall come in like a flood,” it is said, the “ Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against it.” And a standard was lifted up. Jehovah gave, as the Psalmist speaks—He “ gave a banner to them that feared Him, to be displayed because of the truth ; ” and upon that banner was written, as with the finger of God, “ Unto Me every knee shall bow.” It rallied the armies of our Israel, and the enemy was discomfited. So that, as it often happens in the night of nature, that just when the sky is wrapped in deepest shade, the bright and morning star is even then on the horizon, in like manner was that depth of spiritual gloom broken by a burst of light unequalled since the Reformation. The spirit of missions was the “ day-spring from on high ” that “ visited ” us ; a spirit not, indeed, altogether unknown before, though grievously dimmed and enfeebled by manifold unfriendly influences ; but now its fervour was kindled, and now its flame was supplied with a copious flow of grace, and the juncture of the last with the present-century became illustrious for the formation of kindred institutions for the same great work, and all aspired, either by the voice of living witnesses, or by the translated volume of the written Word, to “ fill the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.” Then it was, we may surely say without presumption—then it was that from England’s coasts the apocalyptic angel spread his wings, and rose into “ the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” And from that same period, let us now ask, what has been the history of vital Christianity among us ? Oh !

may we not well believe, brethren, that at that identical moment a voice was heard, as it were, from the midst of the throne, directed to our chosen land, "From this day will I bless thee?" And truly from that day, "God, even our own God, has blessed us." His Spirit has been descending upon us continually in increasing showers; and notwithstanding many, too many, causes for shame and grief which still remain among us, it cannot be denied that the last fifty years have been years of manifest spiritual increase. And this, too, in obvious connection with the missionary cause; because not only in the primary stage of its revival, not only is it to be noted that the very men whom God raised up to be the moral saviours of their land were also those whose spirits He was stirring to enterprise the evangelization of the world, but of later years the growth of piety in our country has visibly gone hand in hand with the exertions that have been used to send Christ's Gospel through the earth. The various expedients which have been found requisite to this end—our missionary meetings, our missionary sermons, our missionary publications—they have given an impetus to the cause of God among ourselves, the ultimate effects of which no mortal eye can follow. Who shall tell in how many a family, in how many a parish, the introduction of the missionary cause has proved to be the dawning of a day of mercy never to be forgotten? Who shall say with how many of our children the first buddings of Christian emotion have burst under the impression of some missionary tale that has touched the susceptible heart, and secured it ever after for the Lord? or how many of maturer years, and even of hoary age, whose hearts, alas! the cares and pleasures of this life had wofully estranged from holy things, the missionary's plea for Christ and for immortal souls has roused to seek their own salvation, and taught them thenceforward to live for God? Or who may know with how many of our pastors the "patient continuance in well-doing" witnessed in their missionary brethren, and the power of Gospel truth evinced in their ministry, have become a stimulus to greater efforts of self-denying zeal, and a closer adherence to the simplicity that is in Christ—a blessing to themselves and to their own flocks? Omniscience alone can estimate, and eternity alone disclose, these blessed details.

And then, too, while in this way awakened consciences and tender hearts have been moved to care for the heathen in their distant darkness, gradually there has been created a sense of responsibility toward others also, even hundreds and thousands of our fellow-men, who, though living all around us, were standing in scarcely less need of our pity than the tribes of savage lands. Seriously-thinking men have been struck by the inconsistency of professing to teach the inhabitants of other climes, while their own people were being destroyed for lack of knowledge—the inconsistency of sending the preachers of God's word to foreign shores, while throngs of their own countrymen were year by year landing on those same shores, but landing only to proclaim how deep was the darkness and depravity which England, even, could tolerate within her own borders. The very heathen, indeed, have not been backward in the sarcasm, "Physician, heal thyself;" and Christian men have felt it to be just. The consequence has been, that while distributing the bread of life to foreigners, we have learned to feed the souls that were lying at our own doors; and very instructive it is to observe, how the foremost in the work of a godly patriotism at home are everywhere the well-known and long-tried friends of missions to the world.

And thus, in every way, individually and collectively, our love toward all men has produced a blessed reaction on ourselves. It were hard, perhaps, in some respects, to say which have been most benefitted, the heathen through us or we through them ; but assuredly we have found it to be a faithful saying—"He that watereth others shall be watered also himself."

Under the persuasion, then, the thankful persuasion of this truth, let us close our discourse, dear brethren, as we proposed, with a few reflections in especial reference to our own circumstances at the present time. We shall advert very briefly to some practical uses to be made of our subject, in its bearings on ourselves, on our Society, on our church, and on our land.

And, in the first place, has not our text suggested and taught every Christian man to ponder on its bearing upon ourselves ? Brethren, your judgments, we believe, will go with us in saying that the present day is one in which we all have the greatest need of looking narrowly to our own spiritual condition. There are mischiefs abroad peculiarly calculated to war against our souls. An intense secularity besets us on every side. The world rests not day nor night in her pursuit of self-aggrandisement, and the believer has to live in the midst of the world exposed to this depraving contamination. Enormous luxury, too, is another feature and another sign of our times ; and, alas ! christian society is not proof against the snare.

And, then, besides these, there are influences of a different character in active operation, influences which, though they may seem at first to be naturally opposed, have yet a secret affinity which causes that they shall seldom shew themselves far apart. On the one hand, we have a revived superstition, setting credulity in the place of faith, and attributing to physical acts in religion the efficacy of Divine grace ; on the other hand there is a rising scepticism which, while it revolts from the excesses of this superstition, would rid itself of whatever in belief or practice its own misnamed intellectuality will not accept.

Against these evils, not to name others also, the men of God need every counterpoise. We want, my brethren, every help to keep our minds stedfastly fixed upon essential truths and eternal realities ; we want every assistance in the cultivation of that mind of God within us, which shall repel at one and the same time the secularity and luxury that tempt the flesh, and the superstition and scepticism that would poison the spirit. In a word, we must avail ourselves of every aid to practical piety.

Behold, then, in the missionary movement, one chief means which the Lord has given us for that end. Oh ! let us throw ourselves into it more heartily, brethren, and God will bring us by its means nearer to Himself. Let it not suffice us to be merely the members of a missionary society, but let us aim to imbibe more and more of the pure missionary spirit—a firm belief of the wrath of God "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," and therefore a deep compassion for the millions of idolatrous and polluted heathen, and an ardent longing "by all means to save some." Oh ! this simple, single-hearted zeal—this is the temper of the man who is "blessed in his deed." And it is upon this that our personal profiting depends. Let us entreat our God to inspire a larger measure of such zeal within us ; and let us seek to stimulate it within ourselves, by often meditating on the actual condition of whole nations in those realms of Satan, where Satan at this moment is revelling in the ruin of the souls of men. Oh ! brethren, oh ! for hearts to burn within us, as we think of a Christless world ! Then, then our interest in

missions would prove a singular safeguard to our own souls. The strong perception of spiritual and eternal things, would be a principle of powerful antagonism to all the corrupt desires of the flesh and of the mind. And not only so, but it would move us to all those particular feelings and actings which God in His mercy greatly overrules to His children's advancement. It would prompt us to that bountifulness of giving, which Scripture testifies that "God is not unrighteous to forget." "He that soweth plenteously," it is said, "shall reap also plenteously;" and what we lend unto the Lord in silver and gold shall be paid us back in the gifts of His Spirit. Beloved brethren, let us count up these gracious returns, for God has bidden us so to do. Let us look for them this evening. Let us give to-night, in the sure belief that sacrifices made in love to Christ and for the souls of men are ordained of God to bless ourselves. Are there hearts here present, in which the pulse of Christian love is quickening, and prompting them to bring a large offering to the treasury of the Lord? Oh! may no chilling parsimony now come in, to check the emotion, and rob them of their blessing! Give, brethren, as you purpose in your hearts; "devise liberal things," and "prove your God herewith, if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing."

Nor let it be in our acts of giving only that we cherish these expectations; but let us go to our meetings, and to all our other engagements in the missionary cause, earnestly seeking a growth in grace by their means. Let us carry ourselves as men who believe that in such a work they are associated with their God. Suppressing, therefore, suppressing whatever tends to levity of thought, or earthliness of motive, or mere excitement of the flesh, and asking and expecting a holier tone of mind as the result to ourselves, and thus looking to ourselves, and taking heed to our spirits, we shall not lose the things that we have wrought, but receive a full reward.

Again: the subject of our discourse suggests a reflection, in respect of our Society, peculiarly appropriate to its present circumstances. During the past year, God has been very graciously enlarging its funds; opening for it in fresh directions new prospects of succour, and materially adding to its list of friends. If we have ventured to speak of this as an encouraging proof that the measure of Christian love to all men is rising among us, we trust in God that the event will justify our expectation. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that societies may increase as ours has done, in patronage, in funds, in agency, and yet their spirituality may not equally advance. The suggestion, therefore, surely will not be thought ill-timed, how much we need, at such a period, to watch and pray: to watch, lest in any degree we lose the simplicity and fervour of our love—to pray, that in proportion to the enlargement of our Institution may be the increase of its holiness; we mean, its constancy to evangelical truth and to vital godliness. Oh! let us charge it, then, dear brethren, let us charge it upon one another, to make this the subject of special supplication at the present time. Let us earnestly beg for our Society the pervading unction of God the Holy Ghost, that every new Association, as it is formed, and every new member, as he is enrolled, may strengthen us the more to "hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Then we shall have cause to remember our Jubilee, not merely for the extension which it gave to the Society in its external form, but most of all for the wider diffusion of that excellent gift, "without which whosoever liveth," whether individual or society, "is counted dead before God."

But again : we view the subject before us in reference to our church. We love the Church of England ; the founders of our Society loved her. They claimed for her no superhuman perfection ; but for fidelity to truth, for purity of worship, and for adaptation to the work of permanently planting the Gospel in the world, they knew no communion to compare with her. We inherit their attachment. " Our heart's desire and prayer " is, that our church may " arise and shine," and be made yet more than ever " a praise in the earth ; " and we cannot but think, that at the present moment God is beckoning her to a position such as she never yet has occupied. At home, her strength was never greater ; abroad, her acquisition of power is unparalleled in all her past history. Only let grace be given her to use her influence aright, and we know not the limit of her spiritual prosperity. Brethren, this prosperity is what you desire : how, then, shall you promote it ? Our text will tell you. Would you see your church established in holiness ? Then labour to increase her " love toward all men." In other words, foster in her bosom the spirit of missions. Call her children to " look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others ; " bid them to remember, that the church is not an institution designed merely to benefit her own members, but rather, that her purpose is through them to bless the world ; that this is the vocation of a church, to be " a city set on a hill," " a light to them that sit in darkness," and that it is just in proportion as she fulfils this vocation, that the light within her shall shine brightly. A talent used shall be a talent multiplied. Give what she may to the heathen, it shall be recompensed more into her own bosom. Even her sons, let them go forth to the ends of the earth—she shall have them still as sons ; and not only so, but as the psalmist prophesies, she shall make them " princes " in every land. They shall extend her dominion, even the kingdom of her Lord, and send her back rich blessings, to compensate their services. Oh ! that our younger brethren, just entering into her ministry, would turn their thoughts to the peculiar honour and blessedness of a missionary ministration ! Often they are told, that the church wants them at home ; but let them reflect,—the church at home will receive from them a twofold service, if God shall call and they shall go, to open the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Their post shall then be one of double honour and of double usefulness ; and we pray them to believe us when we say, that among their elder brethren, there are not a few who, with the views which they now entertain of the missionary calling, would gladly, (if they might) change places with them, in order that entering on life anew they might spend at least some portion of it in missionary labour in distant lands. May God give to the Church of England, for her own sake, a larger supply of members, devoted to its cause, and especially of youthful, vigorous, educated ministers, ready to say, " Here am I, send me." The Gentiles then " shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising ; " for the glory of the Lord shall be seen within her.

We touch upon one point more—the relation of our subject to the prospects of our land. In what a position, brethren, has Britain been standing since we last assembled here ! With an earthquake heaving all around her, the mighty God has kept her firm. The convulsion, however, has not ceased. Even to this hour, while antichrist is struggling for its sceptre in the West, and the false prophet in the East holds his throne with feebleness and fear, the " distress of nations," nearer to ourselves, has created a perplexity, through the

gloom of which no mortal eye can penetrate. At such a crisis, what shall be the anchor of our hope for England's preservation? The world may smile, but we answer without hesitation, for it is the testimony of the Divine Word, as well as the testimony of all experience, that the palladium of England's peace is attachment to the Word of God. If, as we have seen, our social religion has advanced for these fifty years in manifest union with the missionary cause, then we come at once to the conclusion, that the extension of that cause must rank among the chief means for securing to our country the defence of Heaven. And oh! if England would but hear the summons which God is giving her now, by a recurrence of mercies and of means and of opportunities such as no other nation possesses, for acting as His missionary to the world—if she would then identify herself with Jehovah and His truth—she could not fall. Heaven's own consistency forbids the thought. He who said of that most exceedingly wicked city of ancient times, even on her very first profession of repentance, "Should not I spare Nineveh?" would He consent to say of Britain, if only she would keep His charge and be His witness to the nations, "I have no delight in thee?" Nay, His mission to her would be rather like that which was sent to the devoted governor of Judah under circumstances not dissimilar—"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." Brethren, as men who love their country, do we pray that such may be our mercy? Then let us seek to strengthen her alliance to God, by engaging her children more and more in the sanctifying work of Christian missions.

And thus on every account—for the safety of our land, for the prosperity of our church, for the advance of our Society, for the profit of our own souls—shall we not pledge ourselves anew this night, to labour and to pray more fervently than any of us have yet done, in this hallowed cause? Our call to duty, dear brethren, in this instance as in every other, it is a call to blessing; and the grace that moves us to obey will be a sure foretoken of greater grace in store. We shall find it a true proverb, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;" "the Lord of the harvest" Himself shall multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of our righteousness.

UNREAL RELIGION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD,
(DR. SAMUEL WILBERFORCE.)

PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 22, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the St. Margaret's and St. John's Schools.

"And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."
—Acts xix. 16.

IN all that marvellous history of the conflict between the powers of this world and of the world to come, which is contained in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, there is hardly to be found, I think, a more striking or instructive passage than this which we have read this morning. Let us have its particulars distinctly before us, brethren, that through God's help we may learn special lessons for ourselves.

That which it records seems to have happened towards the end of the two years which St. Paul spent in founding and building up the church of Christ at Ephesus. That rich and luxurious city was the stronghold of evil; the prince of this world held it as the very centre of his kingdom, and against him God put forth, by the hand of St. Paul, the special might of the Holy Spirit. In that capital, as upon some conspicuous theatre, the mighty contest raged. "So that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." The easy and careless temper which marked these men was strangely stirred by the sight of these manifest marvels; and not only were many led to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, and listening to it to believe in Christ and to flee to Him for salvation, but even those who did not so believe on Him were forced to feel that new and strange powers were in very deed acting potently against them. It seems plain, that about the time of our Lord's coming in the flesh there was an even unwonted activity and malice amongst those hosts of evil angels, who for their permitted time resist God's work upon this earth. Whether it was that they absolutely knew that in His person, as the champion of humanity, the great battle must be fought—or whether it was that the instincts of their evil nature were roused into a trembling energy of fear and rage and hatred by His appearance—we know not; but it is clear that about this time they exerted an unusual amount of power over the bodies and over the spirits of their human victims. Against these powers a remedy, we are told, had been found among the Jews themselves, in the use of the name of Jehovah; and so there had sprung up a class of men, who professed (and

sometimes, it would seem, with success, from our Lord's words, "By whom do your sons cast them out?") to counteract the workings of the evil one. Now these men would be the first to perceive those powers with which St. Paul was clothed. Just as Simon Magus was one of the first to perceive what was the wonderful effect of the laying on of the apostle's hands, and was led to strive to possess the same power—so was it with these men. Their own employment of the name of Jehovah would make them readily perceive that St. Paul drew his strength from the name of Christ; while their feeble and uncertain success would contrast strongly, in their own eyes, with the surpassing might with which he wrought. And so they were led to look at Christianity mainly in this its most external and outward character, of a system of powers against outward evils. The blessing of Christianity, as it showed itself to them, was, that it possessed these powers. To be able to do something great—to heal some sick man—to cast out some devil, and so to ensure a name for themselves, and the respect of other men, and the being followed by them,—this seemed to them the great blessing of Christianity. And so they sought to use it as a means of effecting these wonders; and no doubt, in a great many cases, the main object of these men was the obtaining either influence over others, or the rewards which would belong to those who possessed and exercised such powers.

Now this was the very opposite to the whole course of St. Paul's dealing with the Gospel. He had learned "in this to rejoice, not that the devils were subject unto him, but that his name was written in the Book of life." The essence of Christianity to him was, that it had brought his soul to know Christ, to find peace in Him, to know God through Him, to have "a good hope towards God," and to be able to live accordingly; and that which he still thirsted for more of was, not a greater power of working miracles—not the power of working greater miracles than those he had wrought, but that he himself might fully and entirely "know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings," that he might be partaker of His glory in the world to come. No contrast, then, you see, could be more complete, than that which existed between these sons of Sceva and St. Paul. He had first been found of Christ, and then he had found Christ for himself; and to find Him was everything in his eye. He had heard His voice; he had seen His pierced side; he had found deliverance in the fierce struggle which had almost torn asunder his mighty spirit, when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And the great light of Christ's Gospel, when it had broken in upon his stormy soul, had been welcomed by him meekly; and at the same time was all the energy of his soul gathered up into this one expression—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And thus knowing Christ, he had found power to come forth from himself, to heal others, as Christ had healed him; he had found Christ first for his own salvation, and then he had gone to speak to others of what he had found himself; and these powers had come out of themselves.

This was St. Paul's case: now look at the contrast. Look at these sons of Sceva—these unbaptized (it would seem,) these unconverted men—not seeking healing themselves at all—not knowing Christ at all for their own salvation—having no desire to find Him as their own portion. They sought to clothe themselves with a power which they saw had been shed forth from on high, in order that they might have the excitement, or the gratification, or the reward of being workers of miracles, and so being followed, run after, admired, and perhaps made wealthy by men. And in this mind they had defied the evil one

in the name of Christ; they had "called over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preached:" and when they did this they were over-mastered; they could not use the weapons which they so impotently handled; the name of Christ, in their mouths, only stirred up to a higher flood-tide of wrath and malignity the rage of these spirits of darkness. Instead of being able to curb it, through the name of Christ, they were hurried helplessly along by it. The man in whom the evil spirits dwelt, in the paroxysm of their working, leapt upon them, and overcame the whole seven at once, so that they "fled out of that house naked and wounded."

This their irreverent attempt, with its frightful issue, produced its natural effect upon all those who heard or saw it: "great fear," we read, "fell upon all those who heard it." These powers, which were working around them, could not thus be trifled with. They were not merely matters of wonder—not things to gaze at, not things to use for earthly purposes, not things to make use of merely for a day, and to have nothing more to do with; the attempt to exert them at the mere will of any man exposed that man to signal peril; they were manifestly only the outward manifestations of some mighty internal reality; they were not the fantastic tricks of a marvel-monger, but they were indications of the near neighbourhood of the Almighty and the Unsearchable, with whom it was very fearful to have really to do. And so a searching self-examination sprung up among those upon whom this fear of the name of the Lord Jesus fell; and it appears that many had been more or less sharing in this evil of the sons of Sceva, because we read that they, being now self-convinced, came to the apostle, and confessed, and showed their deeds, and then burned their evil books of magic, and became real seekers after Christ.

Now, my brethren, these events were no accidental peculiarities of that time, or otherwise we might very soon dismiss them from our thoughts; but they point to a deep and an abiding evil inclination of men's hearts, which is always ready to be stirred up, which is ready to be stirred up in our hearts, which is perhaps working in some of our hearts very strongly at this time: and therefore it so well becomes us to study the teaching of this passage of God's Word. Let us, therefore, ask ourselves this question—Are we free from this evil, which is typified in these "seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew?"

Now when you ask yourselves this question, remember what the essence of their sin was. It was using the name of Christ as a means of obtaining power; instead of seeking to know Christ for themselves, as the Healer and as the portion of their own souls. Now, my brethren, is the temptation to the evil at all impossible to us? Is the existence of this evil very rare among us?

Take, first, its plainest and most unequivocal exhibition: take the case in which we see the most plainly that reproduced now, of which we have been reading in these sons of Sceva. How do they, do you think, differ from them, who in the ministry of Christ's church seek, without knowing Christ for themselves, to wield as to others the powers of the kingdom of His grace? Whether their temptation be of a lower or grosser order, of viewing the Christian ministry as a mere profession, in which they are to perform certain acts for others, and to receive the means of living as their recompence—or whether it be of that far higher and more subtle character, which besets nobler spirits, and would lead them to use the position of Christ's messenger and the powers of His Gospel to influence and to affect other minds, when they have themselves no personal acquaintance in their own inner experience with that which they administer and of which they speak—how plain is it, in either of these

cases, that they are but "calling over evil spirits the name of Jesus whom Paul preached"—but taking up another man's witness, of which they know nothing—but ignorantly delivering it, thinking there is some charm in it, which they have nothing to do with themselves! Surely, they who seek to minister that Gospel, of which they do not partake—surely as to them, my brethren, the fearful character of the sons of Sceva is plain enough to every one amongst us.

Brethren, let me pray you now to mount up from these plainest instances, which belong specially to your clergy, and let me beg you to go to the instances which belong more immediately to yourselves. And first, look at the broad marked features of our own national and political life, and see if we may not see the working of this evil still. Are there not whole bodies of men manifestly without any governing principles of religion for themselves—who do not deny themselves—who are not living with the least faith in Christ,—yet believe Christianity so far as to think it an excellent thing for governing a nation, and preserving it in social order and in political quiet? Is it not a very common thing to hear such men talk of their having great respect for religion, and the like—as if it were a very excellent thing for other people, but which they have nothing to do with themselves? Now, brethren, what can we have plainer than the character of Sceva's sons written upon these men? Christianity is to them plainly, not the knowledge of Christ for themselves, but a set of powers which they desire to put in exercise, because of their supposed usefulness for other people. And what is written, in the broad characters of social life and of national life, as the result of this imitation of the seven Jews? What else is written, but the likeness of their discomfiture?—for what more certainly tends to spread a universal infidelity, than this unreal spirit of Christianity?—as if it were something good for others, but something which has no internal reality for ourselves. How surely does it lead a people to view Christianity as if it were a thorough imposture of state-craft, and not a living power of God, meant to convert the soul of all who come under it!

And now follow this likeness a little further. If this evil is plainly to be read in the features of our public life, is our private life much more free from it, my brethren? Are there not in this very congregation heads of families, who think Christianity an excellent thing, because it will keep their families respectable? Are there not masters in this church to-day, who wish their servants and their dependants to be religious enough to be good servants and tractable dependants? Are there not fathers and mothers, who would by it make their children obedient, and careful, and docile, and well-behaved, and thrifty, and prudent, but who know nothing themselves, and (as far as we can see) are not seeking to know anything, in the secret of their own soul, of Christ and of his salvation? Are there not those who have family prayers, not to seek God's blessing upon their family, but because it is a seemly and useful fringe to the day's occupation—who come to church, not to commune with God, but in order that they may set a good example—who come, perhaps, to the holy communion, not to feed upon Christ the Lord, but to maintain the proper observances which befit their position, and because people would wonder, and say, 'I wonder why they do not come to the communion,' if they did not come? Oh! brethren, is not all this calling over the possessed with devils "the name of Jesus whom Paul preached," but of whom you know nothing at all?

And must not the effect of all this be a very shameful discomfiture now,

just as it was of old? Most assuredly, it is a very shameful discomforture which is the end of it; as to the very employment of these powers which they seek to use—even as to this, my brethren, these people are discomfited. You only defy, by all this, the powers that you cannot master; you only stir up evil that you cannot deal with. Servants, dependants, children—they see through all this, depend upon it; and they shrink instinctively from this spiritual flattery, with which you are seeking to silence them. You must be in earnest yourselves, if you mean to affect them. You do but provoke them to a secret, but confirmed infidelity, by thus seeking to use the awful powers of the world to come, as if they were nothing else but the idle tricks of a juggler, which you could perform upon them, though there was no reality in them. Surely, a moment's thought (if you would only give it) would convince you how perfectly impotent such means are, for making any moral and spiritual impressions upon other people. How do the rebellious appetites—how do the sinful vanities of your children, as they grow up, laugh to scorn this ineffective and unmeaning resistance to their sway! How do they by degrees come even to assent to using words and phrases of profession, which are to be taken by common consent to be just uttered as unmeaning—which are to be said, and no more—and so allow themselves to be mocked by powers, whose wrath they thus challenge!

My brethren, how utterly unlike all this are the character and conduct of some holy man in our day, like St. Paul of old, who is what he says: who began in another way—who began by finding Christ for himself, by finding healing for his own soul, and upon whom is diffused the saving influence of a true healing, the living power which casts out devils—who can go nowhere, and take part in nothing, without men feeling as they mix with him, that there is a reality in this man's religion, that he is living above the powers of this world, and making men long to share with him the deliverance which they see he has obtained!

And then, my brethren, even this is not the worst form of their discomforture; because not only are they thus stripped naked by their enemies, but they are wounded also. This unreality brings a deadly wound, depend upon it, upon themselves. In very truth, brethren, the habit of contemplating Christ's religion and His church as the means of influencing others, instead of seeking living union with Him for ourselves, and for the life of our own souls—this is one of the most deadly sins which can beset any man. We get so used (if we deal thus) to the church and to the revelation of God—we get so used to all the wonders of redemption—that nothing affects us. To such an one everything is a trick which he is to play, and not a verity which he is to realise for himself. Prayer, communion, the name of God, the cross of Christ, His wounds, His death and passion, Christmas, Easter, Good Friday, Whitsuntide, the power of the Holy Ghost—all these are mere instruments, by which he has to carry on a sort of unmeaning process of affecting others. They are masks, which are put on and men look at; and they know not whether there is any reality in them to his own soul. And, my brethren, even such a state as this, is to be driven out of the house of peace, out of the church of Christ—to be driven out of it naked and wounded. What is real in Christ's Gospel, Christ's church, becomes unreal.

And there is yet one more form of this evil, and a still more subtle one than that which I have now spoken of; and that is, my brethren, when a man calls all these powers over himself, and not upon other people—when he seeks to heal certain great evils in his own character, (for instance, irregular appetites)

—when a young man tries to reform himself of certain inconvenient lusts, of inconvenient excesses, or of some other great blemish,—when this is what he is seeking in religion, instead of seeking to know Christ, and to be dwelt in by the power of the Holy Ghost, and to be transformed in all things into His likeness, by that supernatural power which dwells with the church of Christ. Now, I say, this is a far more subtle thing—one much more likely to deceive men than many others; for it is by no means rare, that many a man's religion, when we come to think of it, is made up of this. How many a man, I mean, is seeking for the ascendancy, the self-command, the courtesy, the intellectual power, or the power of influencing others, which Christianity bestows upon a man! He is seeking these things for themselves—not seeking to know Christ, and letting these blessed powers follow that knowledge—not seeking to know and be sure that his name is written in the book of life, and then knowing that the evil spirit will be subject to him, but seeking to have the evil spirit subject to him for itself, instead of seeking that he may know Christ. This man says his prayer, comes to church, communicates, perhaps, to quiet conscience; or perhaps he goes even further—he wants to put his own mind into a certain state; he is (as it were) practising a sort of moral and spiritual self-treatment upon himself. He does not say his prayer because he believes that God will answer his prayer, but because he thinks it is good for himself to put his mind every day into the state of prayer, into the posture of prayer. And so he comes to look at his own feelings, perhaps; and he says to himself—‘I have had a great many good feelings to-day—I am in a very good frame of mind—I have a great desire after that good which I must get in religion,’—all the time his real object in religion being himself, and not Christ—being a certain effect upon his own feelings, or at the very best upon his own conduct, and not that he may know Christ, and be dwelt in by Christ, and glorify Christ, and share Christ's cross here, and share Christ's glory hereafter. Now, then, I ask you, what is this, after all, but a man calling over his own spirit the name of a Saviour that he does not know; seeing that there is a power in Christianity, and that it is very desirable that he himself should know that power, but not being led to seek after Christ, as the Healer of his soul, as the Saviour of his soul, and as the Renewer of his soul? And so this man, too, becomes the sport of the enemy. Sometimes through mighty moral storms, which break in upon him; just when he thinks himself most pious—when he thinks that he has become most decent—some old temptation breaks out upon him, and hurries him away into open iniquity. Sometimes there is a mysterious spiritual working in the man, and he becomes a mere empty formalist; or perhaps he sinks into the depths of despair, because he gets a perception that there is no reality, after all, in this work that he thought was going on within him.

Now, my brethren, if these dangers are so common, what is the cure of them all? It is, in one word, in this—in seeking with all your heart to know Christ for yourselves; seeking, not to know even the powers of Christianity apart from Him, in your soul, but seeking that He should work in you, and to commit your soul to His working; to see that this is the blessing of being in the church of Christ—not that there are a great many things naturally fitted to work certain tempers in you, but that in the church of Christ you come into the very presence of Christ, that you can bring your sick soul to Him—that at the holy communion it is not that remembering His death will work upon your spiritual affections, but that in the holy communion you may meet Him, and that He will work the healing upon your own souls; that you may

bring your children to baptism, knowing that there the Lord will meet them over that font ; that you may come here to this house of prayer, praying to Him ; not that all may join together in prayer and praise—not that you may lift yourselves up to a certain state of feeling, but that you may meet Him who hath said, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them ;” that you may go into your secret closet and pray, not to put your mind into a particular posture or attitude, but because He has said, “Enter into thy closet and shut thy door, and call upon thy Father which heareth in secret, and thy Father which heareth in secret, shall reward thee openly”—because Christ is near us, if we claim His presence—because Christ will work upon you and me, if we will seek that He should work on us—because He will not leave us to ourselves, to our own weakness or to our own strength, but will work mightily in us by the power of the kingdom of His grace.

My brethren, take this, then, as a first lesson—that you rest contented with nothing short of knowing Christ for yourself, as Him who is working salvation for you and in you. And then take this as a second lesson : seek to use the powers which He thus gives you, as one who has his mission from Christ. This is what the sons of Sceva could not do, and it is what they who imitate the sons of Sceva cannot do. They could not take their mission from Christ ; they went to use that name of Christ self-sent, for their own purposes. You, my brethren, who are trying to do good for anybody else, remember always, the power to do this comes from Christ. ‘It is because He has healed me in some measure, it is because He has given me some gift of His grace, that I can hope to do this ; and I must do it to His glory only.’

And then, lastly, let me say, take this as a third lesson you should learn from this truth : seek, my brethren, to spend yourselves in working for Him. Beware of trying to build up yourself, by doing His work. Strive to say every day—‘All I have is too little to give to Him, who gave up heaven and earth for me ; I am, after all, an unprofitable servant ; I desire more and more to be able to spend myself for Him—to give myself and my services to the weakest, the meanest, and the most ignorant of His flock—to do this, though no eye of man should ever see what I am doing—to mortify myself in ways which nobody else knows of—only that I may glorify Him, and that His power may rest upon me.’

My brethren, I do beseech you to-day who have come into this church, to worship God—I beseech you, apply this to the matter we have in hand. You have to help to-day the schools of this great parish ; and they greatly need your help. Many of you who live in this parish know the great difficulties against which these schools have had to struggle—that they are hardly ever out of debt, and that now there is a debt of some seventy pounds upon them, which you must raise. My brethren, I say, try to-day, with prayer and with a devotion of yourselves to Christ—try to make some offering to Him, in this spirit of giving yourselves to Him, who gave Himself for you. Can you have a stronger call ? If these children are not bred up in Christ’s truth, what will they be bred up in instead ? Will they not have the devil’s teaching, if you do not secure for them Christ’s teaching ? You cannot stay, my brethren, their training, any one day ; it is for you to say whether they shall be trained by Christ, or trained by the evil one. Trained they will be. If you will not work for Christ, the devil and the devil’s agents will work for him. There is not a day passes, but what a multitude of children, very near this place where we are gathered together, are learning lessons to make them fit for hell. My

~~brethren, will you do nothing to teach them lessons, to make them fit for~~
~~God's glory in that world to come?~~ Can it be that you have found Christ for
yourself, and yet will not go forth to call His name? Why, this is worse
about than the case of Scribes, for they did not know the power of Christ in
their own souls, though they had glimmering light enough to see that there
was a blessing in it to others. You say that you do know this power for
yourselves; and yet you have no heart to make the power known to others!
My brethren, this is not the sort of Christianity that will do for a death-bed
or a day of judgment; and oh! I beseech you, cast it away from you now,
before you come to a death-bed and to the judgment-day.

There is much in the state of these parishes to call upon you to exert yourselves. There is much in their eminent want. My brethren, none of you could have passed through the streets leading up to this church to-day, without having your heart made sore within you. Men and women gathered in knots at the street corners, as if there was nothing for them in Christ's Gospel—no healing in His cross, no place in His church. In such parishes as these this evil triumphs, and seeds itself again and again. And this great amount of evil, my brethren, in this vast population—this is a great call upon you to exert yourselves heartily.

And then there are calls of another kind yet. There is this call, brethren—that God has given you here a very active and self-denying ministry. Only for a moment remember what has been done in this parish for the last few years—how God has prospered you already. Only remember that in the year 1833 the whole amount of church schooling in this great parish was, that thirty-seven children were taught upon the Sunday in a back room in College-street; and remember that now two thousand children, thank God, in this parish, are being taught the way of God. Has not God prospered us, then, in this? Has not God prospered us, in raising up Sunday school teachers in this parish—those who have given not only what you are asked to-day to give, at the most some little superfluity—perhaps a meal which you can do without, by only bearing with a little craving of hunger,—but who have given up their time, their strength, their energy to the work—who, having found Christ, have gone Sunday after Sunday, in the strength of His name, to make the same power of Christ known to others also. It is God's blessing, brethren, that has raised up these among you. Look at the increase of church accommodation given you already. Remember that in 1837 there was only this church in this great parish; and now there is another church, holding twelve hundred souls. And then remember, that God has put it into the hearts of two individuals, two single members of His church, to bless this parish with building in it two other separate churches. A rare act of His goodness to a very desolate parish! So that if it pleases God to prosper us, by the end of next year we may hope to see five churches, and five districts, and five centres of the Christian ministry, brought to bear upon this desolate population.

My brethren, if God has thus prospered you, will not you return to Him according to His mercy to you? Oh! I beseech you, show to-day that you do indeed know what it is to go to Him for healing, by giving with a hearty eye to Him, that which shall enable these, your most destitute brethren, to be gathered in the day of their youth into the blessed flock of His true sheep.

OUR MISSION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH M'NEILE, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET.

ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 17, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Scripture Readers' Association.

"And He said unto them, When I sent you, without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough."—Luke xxii. 35—38.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in the reality and perfection of His human nature and human feelings, was "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief:" yet His disciples, and those who were in daily intercourse with Him, did not probably perceive this as His habitual characteristic. We have reason to think, that in outward demeanour He was serene, rather than mournful. No doubt there was at all times a very deep solemnity on His spirit. Everything conspired to produce this—His own penal position, as well as His own personal feelings, led to this. His position before God was awful. He was standing under the law as a rule, and as a broken rule. He was under the law as a curse. His personal feelings were much excited, for His compassion for the perishing world around Him was intense, and His perception of what it is to fall into a lost eternity, was lively. But while these elements of inward moral conflict were at full work, there does not appear to have been any exhibition, any display of grief in His outward man; and probably the impression made most habitually on those around Him, on His own disciples particularly, was not so much that He was a Man of sorrows, as that He was a Man of secret, supernatural power. They had almost daily experience of this power. They found, themselves in habitual intercourse with a Friend, who was able to supply all their wants, to guard them against every danger, to support them in every distress, or rather, to ward off the approach of distress from them. Thus, they were learning to lean on His all-sufficiency—a precious lesson, but not the only one which He designed to teach them, and, through them, to teach us. They had to learn Him in another character, as their Forerunner in suffering, leaving them an example that they should also bear their cross, and follow Him. He apprised them of this. He told them what would befall Himself, and what would befall them. He told them distinctly that the Son of Man must go to Jerusalem; that there He would be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and the scribes; that they would deliver Him over to the Gentiles; that they would buffet Him, and spit upon Him, and crucify Him. He told the disci-

ples what would befall them ; that the time was at hand when they would be put out of the synagogues, and that men who were compassing their death would think they were doing God service. The disciples were slow, because they were unwilling learners of such a lesson as this. On one occasion when the Lord had performed a stupendous miracle, and when the people who were spectators of it were giving utterance to their acclamations of transport and delight at the power of God manifested among them, Jesus turned to the disciples and said, " Let these sayings sink into your ears, for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men." ' Let these sayings which declare My majesty sink into your minds, and make impression upon you, for presently you will require all the consolation to be derived from them when I am delivered into the hands of My enemies.' Still they were slow to learn. It was an unpalatable lesson. They were slow to admit the possibility that He should suffer, because if He suffered, they might suffer also. Hence their incredulity ; hence, when He reiterated His prediction, Peter said, speaking for them all, " That be far from Thee, Lord : this shall not come unto Thee." Peter when he so spake, was under a temptation of Satan. It was with reference to that and similar assaults upon the disciples that the Saviour addressed these words to Peter, which precede the text. " The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat : but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter, full of zeal and warmth, full also of self-ignorance, declares his determination to follow his Master even unto death. Jesus said, " I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." And then to warn them more particularly of the difference between the circumstances in which they had been placed while He was with them, and the circumstances in which they would presently find themselves placed after His departure, He reminds them of the first mission He sent them on, and gives them a second in terms which rescind the first. He said to them, " When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and staves, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written, must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors : for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough."

There is a certain degree of obscurity about the passage, partly because of the subject, and partly because of the figurative terms in which it is expressed. My present object shall be, in the first place, to remove the difficulty, if possible, making the passage clear ; and then to endeavour to make the passage profitable, applying it generally and with especial reference to the cause I advocate amongst you this evening.

For the removal of any difficulty that rests upon the passage itself, consider, first, the first mission on which Jesus sent His disciples, and to which He here refers. The terms of that mission you will find in the ninth chapter of this Gospel, at the beginning. "He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money : neither have two coats a-piece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive

you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere." Their support during that mission was as supernatural as their occupation. They were both of the immediate and miraculous interference of God. Men's houses, and men's hearts and men's hands were open to them. Everything was supplied them. Their clothes waxed not old, or if they did, they had new ones without the ordinary use of means. They felt no hunger, or if they did, food was supplied without the ordinary care upon the subject. They needed to use no means. The genius of the instruction under which they went forth was simply this: 'Make use of no means for anything: trust to Me for everything.' So they went forth, and when they returned and He asked them, had they lacked anything? they said, no, "nothing."

Purse, and scrip and shoes, taken literally, are things familiar to all men. They are here taken significantly, rather than literally. A purse is significant of money, being that in which money is usually kept. A scrip is significant of provision for a journey; it means a traveller's bag, and was in common use in those countries and at that time where refreshment was not to be had at every stage and station on the way, as it is in our land. But amongst ourselves we may still get the idea by reference to sea voyages. In those circumstances and in that class where sea-store is provided by the passenger for himself, it is his scrip. Shoes are equally and simply significant, and mean all the wardrobe necessary for a journey, particularly a journey performed on foot. So that these were significant of all secondary supplies; and the Lord's command was, 'Take no change of raiment, no provision for the way, no money in order to procure those things by ordinary means; trust entirely to Me.' Now had the disciples taken money, or provisions, or clothes, it could only have arisen from practical infidelity: it could only have arisen from some secret idea that they would require these things; in other words, that what the Lord said to them was not fully to be depended upon. But the disciples were guilty of no such infidelity. They went forth depending upon their Lord's word, and when they returned from their mission, He could confidently appeal to them and ask them, 'When I sent ye forth without any second coat, without any means to supply your wants in the ordinary way, did ye want for anything?' "And they said, nothing."

Such was their first mission—a very remarkable circumstance in itself, and a very striking specimen of the higher and better state of things which shall eventually be introduced when the Lord shall reign over the whole earth, and His disciples reign with Him: when all things shall be theirs, without effort, without labour, the earth giving her increase and God giving His blessing. Many of the Lord's miracles spoke before hand of that wonderful state of things which shall be at the last: His controul of the elements, His controul of the evil spirits, His removal of the diseases of the human body—all are significant as so many specimens beforehand of the kingdom which is the great burden of prophecy, and shall eventually be established over the whole earth. But the time for that kingdom was not yet. It is not yet. A mission of a very different character was to intervene, and on that He proceeded to send them, rescinding the first. Now, He says, 'but *now* these miraculous circumstances are at an end—"now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip." Now here, as before, purse and scrip are significant of money and provisions for the way, and the genius of the direction *now* is simply this—*now*, as contrasted with the former commission—*now*, means are to be used;

miracles are no longer to be expected; other means are to be employed with discretion and judgment—all the means in which you find yourselves providentially prepared to act. It is as if the Lord had said unto them, ‘I could continue the miraculous mission if it were right and best, but there is a needs-be otherwise: a seriously painful course is to be followed both by Myself and you: the things written concerning Me must be accomplished: this is written concerning Me, “He was numbered with the transgressors:” I must be numbered with the transgressors. “The things concerning Me have an end.” I could indeed summon twelve legions of angels to disperse all my adversaries, but “then how could the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” How could the work of redemption be completed?’ The work of redemption is not a work of mere power. It is a legal work—a work carried out according to the great principles of the law of God. Man is lawfully Satan’s captive, and the lawful captive must be lawfully delivered. God does not act unlawfully even against Satan. ‘The things written of Me, expressive of the great purposes of God in the redemption, must be accomplished. I must be “numbered with the transgressors.” You must be left to feel the weight of this suffering condition also. You must be left without My personal presence, without any miraculous support. You must be left to use means, trusting to Me by faith, without getting daily visible supplies from My miraculous power. You must follow Me under all the disadvantages of suffering and privation, without the encouragements you have hitherto enjoyed of miraculous interference. Therefore “he that hath a purse” among you, “let him take it;” and he that engages in any special enterprise for Me, let him have “his scrip,” And not only so, but He adds, “he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.”

This is a new and additional feature, and one of lively interest. A sword, taken literally, is a weapon of war. But here like to the other words it is taken significantly; and significant of what? Now you will learn very distinctly what a sword signifies in our Lord’s language in reference to it. At the thirty-fourth verse of the tenth chapter of St. Matthew we read these words of Christ: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” He explains himself in what follows: “for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” The separation occasioned by the Gospel is felt as a sword in the world. The Lord says to His disciples that He came to give them peace. “My peace I give unto you,” He says. But when He speaks of what He came to cause in the world, “think ye that I came to send peace on the earth?” ‘Nay, by putting peace into you, while the same peace is not put into all others, I send a sword on the earth. By planting the peace of God in the bosoms of some, I stir in them a zeal for God. Zeal for God will be felt as a sharp sword in an ungodly world. Therefore, by the very power of giving you peace, I send a sword upon the earth by your means—separating families, because peace will dwell in one bosom, while another is without that peace. Therefore shall a man’s foes be “they of his own household.”’ That is the sword that Jesus draws—a sharp, sharp sword. It has been felt ever since. Zeal for God, then, is a sword in a sluggish world. It is felt so. It condemns the world, and the world turns against it, and gnashes with its teeth upon it.

Now it is somewhat remarkable, and most exceedingly significant, that the Lord here does not represent the sword as obtained by parting with their

purse or scrip. But if a man have no sword, he is to part with his garment and procure one. The purse and scrip, as we have already seen, signify the use of means, and there is no contrast between that and the sword. The sword is to be used in the use of means, and therefore the purse and scrip are not to be parted with in order to procure a sword. But garments are significant of comfort, of ease, peace, quietness, the enjoyments of life, which may or may not be possessed by a Christian. If they may be, without interfering with his zeal, well. But if he find his garment interfere with the use of his sword,—his garment so comfortable, so easy, so soft, so satisfactory, that his zeal abates, and he becomes quite quiescent with the world again, instead of bearing testimony against the world,—if he have no sword, his personal comforts must give way, his warm garment must come off, his pleasant fireside must be forsaken, his sword must be drawn, and he must go forth for God. If a man have no sword, “let him sell his garment and buy one.” The disciples misunderstood Him, as they very frequently did when He used this figurative language. They thought He was speaking of a real sword; and looking amongst themselves they discovered that there were two swords in the company, and they said unto Him, “Behold, Lord, here are two swords.” And Jesus said, “Enough.” This answer is sufficient of itself to show that He did not mean literally swords, because two swords are not enough to arm eleven men literally. But His meaning is—‘Enough is said; enough is said to show what I mean; not unto you now, at this moment, but when all this shall be recorded, when you will write this down, and when this shall be compared with the facts of the case, enough is said to leave on record what I intended to convey—enough.’ It was plain from their conduct in the garden immediately afterwards that they mistook Him. This answer did not satisfy them, and when He was assailed, one of them drew one of the swords, and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus interposed; “Put up your sword in the sheath,” He said—“They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” He reproved them for drawing the literal sword in His defence. It was no weapon for such a purpose.

Yet here I would not be misunderstood as conveying any determined expression of opinion as to what the testimony of Scripture generally is on the subject of Christian men using the sword under any circumstances. The testimony of Scripture is strong apparently in favour of it. When soldiers came to John Baptist to ask what was their duty, he told them to be content with their wages. He did not tell them to cease to be soldiers, but to be content with their wages, to do violence to no man; which was in fact sanctioning their continuing to receive their wages. And it is somewhat remarkable that the man most renowned for his faith—a faith that transcended the faith of Israel, and elicited an expression of admiration from Jesus—was a Roman soldier, a centurion; and it is further remarkable, that the man selected to make the first open declaration of the Gospel, passing from the Jews, among the Gentiles—the man selected for the first outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles was a Roman soldier, a centurion. But the question generally is not discussed here. It is enough to show the figurative meaning of “the sword” in our Lord’s present discourse now before us; that it was designed to stir them up to zeal—zeal in the Lord’s service; that sword was significant of zeal, and that He did not then and at that time intend to encourage or direct them to use the literal sword. This is plain.

Now the explanation of a passage like this is certainly full of interest; and I think the application of it is no less full of improvement. The first and simplest

application seems to be to the immediate followers of the disciples ; the special mission given to the ministers of the Gospel, that they should go forth in the service of their Lord. They have no right to expect miracles in their missions, and therefore must use means. They have no right, I think, to expect any miraculous direction or support in the proclamation of the Gospel, but only that general support promised to all Christians in answer to prayer. A purse, then, is significant with reference to their mission, significant of knowledge, a store of knowledge of all kinds, theological knowledge chiefest of course, but not exclusively. All sorts of knowledge are valuable in this great mission. And here, they are exhorted, I think, to have and to use their purse. In like manner a scrip is significant of a proportion, a selection out of the purse for some special enterprise ; sea store for a special voyage, preparation for a special sermon. And I think that the passage altogether reproves the mistake, not to call it by a harsher word, of those who fancy that they ought not to premeditate what they are going to say, that they ought not to think or write beforehand, because it limits the Holy Spirit. I think the passage is altogether a reproof of such a misconception of the present duties of ministers of the Gospel, and that they ought on every occasion to have a carefully selected scrip, as they ought generally to supply themselves with a well-stored purse, and certainly not to forget their sword. But if they find the enjoyments which it pleases God to strew in their path tending to hinder them from zeal in His service, the softest garment of personal or domestic enjoyment must be readily and willingly put away, and the sword of continued zeal drawn and kept sharp and bright, that they may honour their Master who has engaged them in such a mission.

But the subject has a wider and more general application. Purse is significant of property of every kind ; station, influence, rank, everything that gives especial weight to a man's words or a man's actions amongst his fellow-men. In this sense every man has a purse, although the depth of the purses vary exceedingly ; but he that hath a purse, any influence, any station, any rank, any weight, from character or other cause, amongst his fellow men, let him take it and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a man is not at liberty to hide his talent in a napkin, neither to squander it on the enjoyments of the present world. He is not his own : he is bought with a price. All he is and all he has belongs to Jesus Christ, purchased by His blood. Let such a man feel the weight of the responsibility that lies upon him. What has the Lord done for him ? Bought him with Himself, His own precious blood ; and He has given him a purse to use. Whatever the influence may be ; whatever the extent of it ; whatever the amount, still there is something ; and he that hath this purse, let him take it to serve the Lord withal, and likewise the scrip. The service of the Lord consists of a variety of departments. We must not lose the practical power of it in the general expression of service, without limiting and dividing and applying it to one service after another. The scrip, then, has reference to some special enterprise ; and he that hath a purse, and who takes it and consecrates it to the service of God, let him also have his scrip for each particular enterprise as it arises.

And here I would apply the enterprise now before us, and ask you, all of you, to whom God has given a purse, to use it for His purpose, for His glory ; and now, with reference to the Scripture Readers' Association, to be provided with your scrip ; that is, a wise and judicious selection out of your purse. Out of that general influence, that general wealth, the general position, the general station, with which God has blessed you, let a well-selected portion be given

to this enterprise. "He that hath his purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip." It is a noble enterprise. You know the nature of it. It is to assist the ministers of overgrown parishes, that is, overgrown in population; men who could not, if their health were better than it is, and their strength double what it is, and if every day had four-and-twenty-hours instead of twelve, go and see the people as the people ought to be seen, or speak to the people as the people ought to be spoken to. The people, the poor people, the ignorant people, the degraded masses of the community, who are found in every civilised and thickly-peopled land, in the parishes, and courts, and lanes of every great city,—they must be followed; they cannot, they will not come out and sit in pews in churches like this. You have not church-room for them; and if you had, you cannot expect them in their present condition, to come and expose themselves. They are ashamed to look at one another, much less to look at you. They hate one another. They quarrel with one another; and even in the thickest scenes of population in the town you will find that neighbours are ignorant of neighbours. They do not visit. They each stand aloof. They are insulated, though surrounded by masses. They rarely speak but to quarrel. "Hateful and hating one another," the apostolical description of the heathen is precisely the description of that population. They must be sought by a man who will bear unkind words without returning such—by a man who will bear to be evil entreated, and still address them as friends. They must be sought for in kindness, and they must be sought after by a man not too much elevated above their own condition in life to take such treatment at their hands. Would you wish a clergyman to be exposed to such treatment? I am sure you would not. I am sure that your own good feeling recoils from the notion of a man of education and refinement being exposed to the treatment that any man must meet with, in the first instance at least, in going into such scenes. The Scripture Readers, then, form a link between the lost part of the population and the direct messengers of Jesus, who are going to seek and to save the lost. We would not delegate all the work to them, but we want pioneers as well as helpers. In some places we dare not go without help. In some places we would not ask a single Scripture Reader to go by himself. It is not safe. It is not fair to a man of his character, or to his personal safety. Our Lord has taught us a lesson of wisdom here too. When He sent out messengers into the city of Jerusalem, He sent them two and two; and into the other cities where He would go Himself, He sent them two and two. With reference to many localities in our great towns, this principle has not perhaps been sufficiently looked to, or sufficiently acted upon, that the men should go two and two—at least two together. My dear brethren, the more you will take the pains to put yourselves in possession of the facts of the case connected with this class of society, the more your consciences will be constrained to support the Scripture Readers. In plain English, we cannot do without them. We shall lose the population, and have a recoil that will be the destruction of the country, without help of this kind.

The Scripture Readers' Association, formed in the metropolis, has already wrought much good. The last report is most encouraging. You are aware that it now assists seventy-two incumbents, that it sends forth ninety Scripture Readers, who are carrying the message of salvation to 100,000 people. I read here an account from one of the clergymen, who says, "the population of my district parish is more than 30,000, but the labours of the Scripture Reader are limited to about 25,000, and in future his labours will be limited to about 15,000 or 16,000, on account of the recent consecration of two churches,

with districts. In my opinion, the usefulness of the agency of Scripture Readers in aid of the labours of the clergy in so large a population cannot be too highly appreciated, on account of the inefficient number of clergy appointed to superintend so extensive a field. My present Scripture Reader has been labouring with me for the last eighteen months, during which period, chiefly by his instrumentality, above 700 persons have been brought to the rite of holy baptism." He had searched out 700 persons, old and young, who were still unbaptised. Some were Unitarians; some were adults, not belonging to any church. "Many sick and dying persons have derived great comfort and benefit from his visits, and I may mention one in particular, an infidel, who paid no respect to religion, and at first refused to be visited at all. By means of the Scripture Reader the man was gradually brought to acknowledge his sinfulness and his need of a Saviour, and died a true penitent, rejoicing in the hope of salvation." There is joy among the angels of God over the labours of that Scripture Reader, over a sinner repenting on the earth.

I was deeply grieved to learn, in the application made to me to preach on this occasion for this Society, that it is not supported as it well, very well, deserves to be. I entreat you to try, by the secret power of grace upon your hearts, and in prayer—I entreat you to try and affect yourselves with this subject—to feel for the population—to shake off the garments that are so easy, so soft, and so comfortable, and the selfishness that prompts us to retire evening after evening, after the labours of the day, and enjoy ourselves at our own comfortable firesides with our dear families. It is very pleasant, it certainly is; and if all the population of the land were as we are, it would be lawful as well as pleasant; the garment might then be worn, and the sword might then be sheathed. But we are not come to that state yet. The enemy is in the field—that great enemy, the devil and Satan, carrying thousands and tens of thousands to ruin, while we sit still. Oh! if any man amongst you feels that with reference to this cause he lacks a sword, in the name of God, let him throw off his garment, and go and get a sword. Let him deny himself the pleasure of his easy chair, the hearth, and the happy family. Let him go out himself amongst the poor; draw his Christian sword, and go into the battle, see what Satan is doing, and try if he can rescue one precious soul for Jesus from the snares of the devil. Oh! my friends, the time is short; and "what is a man profited, if he gain" and enjoy "the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What would a man give at last in exchange for his soul? Come, then, draw this "sword," this precious "sword." Zeal for God in this day and generation! zeal for God! Shake off the lethargy, the torpor, the callousness concerning those great questions, that leave you at leisure to enjoy yourselves while thousands perish, and help. Many of you can help in person; all can help with some influence; all can help with some money. "He that hath a purse, then, let him now take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

CHRIST OUR WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION,
AND REDEMPTION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

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(Of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Incumbent of Brixton.)

PREACHED IN ST. SAVIOUR'S CHURCH, SOUTHWARK,
ON TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 1849,

At the Visitation of the Venerable Archdeacon Hoare, for the Deanery of Southwark.

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30.

MY reverend brethren, it is generally admitted that St. Paul is the best model for a Christian minister; consequently, if we are desirous of labouring in our Lord's vineyard with effect, we must follow this highly-favoured servant of our Divine Master in the subject, manner, and scope of his ministrations. We must, like him, be "determined not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" indeed, it is obvious from the history and writings of this great apostle that subsequently to his conversion the grand object which he proposed to himself, and in the pursuit of which he was willing "to spend and be spent," "to live and to die," was to win souls to Christ, and thus to promote the glory of God and the real happiness of man. "When," (to use his own words,) "it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." From that time he was "instant in season and out of season," in endeavouring to turn many to righteousness, in publishing the good tidings of great joy to all people, preaching among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Being himself penetrated with a deep sense of the wonderful love of Jesus, in dying for the redemption of a perishing world, he was earnestly desirous for that love to be experienced by others, constraining them "to live no longer unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." Having been himself led by Divine grace to a knowledge of the things that belonged to his everlasting peace, it was his noble ambition to be an instrument in the hands of the Spirit in bringing many of his fellow sinners to the same knowledge—in converting them from the error of their ways, and in leading them to that "wondrous cross" on which the Prince of Glory died.

Various were the methods adopted by the apostle in the pursuit of this great object. He watched and wept, he earnestly prayed and deeply felt for the multitudes whom he beheld sitting carelessly and unconsciously in darkness, and in the shadow of death; and in the endeavour to turn them "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," he employed at one time argument and reasoning—at another, admonition and warning—at another, solicitations and entreaties. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," he sometimes strove to persuade men to escape them, by setting those terrors in dread array before them; but it is evident that the subject on which he most delighted to expatiate was the free

of God in Christ Jesus, and the rich privileges with which His suffering people are invested. This was the weapon which he loved most to wield, "a sword of truth, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places;" and he found it a weapon "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Yea, the grand object of all his ministrations was to exalt the Saviour and debase the creature. "The Jews required a sign and the Greeks sought after wisdom," "but," says the apostle, "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Surely, then, it cannot be denied that the words of our text, which were addressed by this great apostle to the church at Corinth, may with equal propriety be addressed to all the true disciples of Christ; for, however dispersed and separated, they constitute one spiritual body, one holy church, one great family, invested with the same privileges, and partakers of the same blessings. They are all in Christ Jesus, by faith enjoying a spiritual and living union with Him. And, therefore, to all that are thus in Him, (as well as to the Corinthians,) He is "made of God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And here, my reverend brethren, the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel come at once before us; the helpless and guilty condition of man in a state of nature, as "the child of wrath," our need of a Mediator and the atonement of Christ, and of that "inward and spiritual grace," which is justly described as "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." It is not, however, from man's desert that these invaluable blessings flow, but from the free grace and mercy of our Heavenly Father; as it is written, "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The Father, perfect in wisdom, formed the plan of man's salvation, which the Saviour voluntarily accomplished. The Father, rich in mercy, gave the Son of His bosom, the Son of His love, to redeem from endless misery our ruined race, and "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;" and to them that are in Christ Jesus, He is "made of God their wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

I. We remark, in the first place, that Christ is of God made to them *wisdom*. By nature we are all alike, blind and ignorant, as it respects the things which belong to our peace. However refined by the embellishments of education, however rich in the treasures of science, however sedulous and successful in the cultivation of the mind, the acquisition of knowledge, and the attainment of human wisdom, there is, my reverend brethren, a wisdom (quite distinct from this, and infinitely superior to it) of which all are by nature destitute; and this wisdom is from above, and can be acquired only by a spiritual discernment, by fervent prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that we may "know Him and the power of His resurrection," whom savingly to know is life eternal. Now, this wisdom we all stand in need of, and Christ alone can impart it.

Oh! how striking is the folly which characterizes the man who possesses not the wisdom which is from above! He has a soul—an immortal soul—a soul which must exist in eternal felicity or eternal misery; and he knows this, and yet

lives regardless of its interests; lives as if he knew that his soul must perish with his body; lives as if he were certain that the present life were the only one. He is fully convinced that his days in this world are but few, fleeting, and precarious; he well knows that he must soon bid an eternal farewell to all terrestrial good; and yet he centres all his hopes, his desires, and his cares in it; his heart and affections are firmly rivetted to it, and he lives as if he were never to leave it. He reads in the volume of inspiration, that "it is appointed unto him once to die, and after that the judgment;" that "he must stand before the tribunal of Christ, and render a strict account of all the deeds done in the body;" and yet he makes no preparation for the hour of death, no preparation for the day of judgment, no preparation to meet his God. He is told by a divinely-instructed apostle, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him;" and yet he seeks not those inconceivably glorious things which are above, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Alas! what ignorance of the nature and evil of sin does he betray, by regarding such conduct as light and excusable, vainly believing that the Almighty will readily overlook and forgive it. He also, by such conduct, shows how ignorant he is of the truth and immutability of the word of God, in presuming to think that the awful threatenings which are denounced against impenitent transgressors will not be realized; he is indeed grossly ignorant of the human heart, by not feeling his need of the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; he is also entirely destitute of a scriptural and experimental knowledge of the way of salvation revealed to us in the Gospel, and of the doctrines there inculcated, by attempting to establish a fancied righteousness of his own, and refusing to submit himself to the righteousness of God, or to place his reliance simply, entirely, and exclusively on the merits of a crucified and risen Redeemer.

But to them who are in Christ Jesus, He is wisdom. "For in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and of His fulness have they received." Enlightened by His word and by His Spirit, they know the things which belong to their peace, they live as strangers and pilgrims on earth, who have no continuing city here; and, therefore, they diligently seek a better country, even the heavenly Canaan. Deeply conscious of the transcendent value of the soul, they are habitually alive to its interests. Impressed with a full conviction of their own unworthiness, they place their entire dependence for acceptance with God, solely on the merits of Christ: and wisely is their dependence placed.

II. For we observe, secondly, that Christ is made of God unto them *righteousness*. As fallen creatures, and as guilty creatures, justly might we despair of ever finding acceptance with God, were it not for the heart-cheering assurance, that Christ is our righteousness. Fallen from original righteousness—corrupt in heart—carnal in mind—depraved in nature, we might, my reverend brethren, well ask, how could it be possible for us, to render an undeviating, perfect, and sinless obedience to the just, and pure, and holy law of God? or how could such a righteousness be wrought by us as God might accept, without the compromise of His truth and justice?

Oh! then, let us not deceive ourselves, or others, upon this momentous point: and if we would be clear from the blood of all men, let us never fail to proclaim to our respective flocks, "whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear," that it is not a partial—it is not a defective righteousness that He (who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity) can look upon with complacency; indeed St. James declares, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one

point, he is guilty of all." "In many things," (saith the same apostle) "we offend all." And the testimony of St. Paul is the same, "All have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God." "Wherewith, then, shall we appear before the Lord? We want an entire, complete, and perfect righteousness, in which we may come before Him; and where shall we find it? Ah! where, but in Christ Jesus? And, blessed be God, to them that are in Him He is made righteousness, having rendered that full, undeviating, and universal obedience to the Divine law, which we were unable to render. Yes, He has fulfilled it in all its parts—he has magnified and made it honourable, for He has wrought out a perfect righteousness; and His righteousness is imputed to the believer, and in that righteousness he may with confidence appear before God, and find acceptance with Him. It was for our encouragement proclaimed by the prophetic voice of Jeremiah—"This is His name, whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness;" in allusion to which, St. Paul describes it to be, "Even the righteousness of God, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe." And the same apostle further declares "As, by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous."

Here, then, we may see, that every true believer in Jesus may well adopt the beautiful language of Isaiah, and exclaim, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

III. This leads us to observe, thirdly, that Christ is of God made unto us *sanctification*. And here, my reverend brethren, we may perceive how strikingly, and how beautifully, all the various doctrines of the Gospel correspond and harmonize with each other! and what a bond of union there is between them! what a golden chain connects them! Yet, alas! it has been supposed by some, that those peculiar and fundamental doctrines of the Gospel—salvation through Jesus as our "all in all," justification by faith alone, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, have a tendency to produce and foster a licentiousness of sentiment in matters of religion, and a licentiousness of conduct and of practice; but our text might convince them, if other proof were wanting, that the very reverse of this is the fact; for to them who receive Christ as their wisdom, and rely entirely on Him as their righteousness, He is made sanctification.

We must, however, be very careful to point out the difference between justification and sanctification; inasmuch as our justification is in God only, not in ourselves; our sanctification is in ourselves only, and not in God. By our sanctification we are made righteous in ourselves, but not accounted righteous by God; by our justification we are accounted righteous by God, but not made righteous in ourselves. The twelfth article of our church declares, that good works, which are the fruits of faith, necessarily spring out from a true and lively faith; and therefore, be it remembered, that "faith without works is dead." There are, however, doubtless some, who "name the name of Christ," and profess to be "in Him," without departing from iniquity; but what says the voice of inspiration on this point?—"Ye shall know them by their fruits." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" "A good tree will bring forth good fruit;" consequently, all that are in Christ Jesus must follow after holiness; and receiving Christ in all His offices, and living in spiritual union with Him, they are enabled by divine grace to follow after it successfully, and to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;" for He graciously gives them His Holy Spirit, even that Spirit whom His mediatorial

work has purchased and procured for them, and thus, through the mighty influences of that all powerful Agent, they are gradually renewed after the Divine image—they maintain a holy and consistent walk with God—they grow in grace—they advance and ripen (if we may so speak) in a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light—they mortify indwelling sin—"crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts," "and let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven."

These, my reverend brethren, are some of the distinguishing marks of all those of whom it may truly be said, they are in Christ Jesus. However unworthy they may be in their own estimation, and however they may be despised by the formalist and the profane, yet they are described in Holy Writ, as "the light of the world," and like unto "a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid." Their conversation is in heaven—they have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness—deeply sensible that Christ "gave Himself for the church, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy" as God is holy—in humble dependence on His grace and Spirit, they go from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, till they appear before God in Zion, and grace becomes glory. "Being made free from sin, and the servants of God, they have their fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

IV. We remark further, Christ is made *redemption*. By nature we are all slaves to sin and captives to Satan, and are obnoxious to the awful curse of the Divine law, which we have transgressed. For we are divinely told, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." And where is the man that hath continued in all things that are written in the book of the law? When and where did he live, of whom it may truly be said, that he perfectly obeyed it? In what age and in what country was he to be found, that never transgressed it—that never committed sin? Ah! my reverend brethren, we well know, that One only, from the foundation of the world, lived sinless upon earth; and that Christ alone was as a lamb without blemish and without spot. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray;" "all have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God." All are guilty, and exposed to a sentence of eternal death. But, blessed be God! though against us His violated law speaks out its thunders; yet "in strains as sweet as angels use, the Gospel whispers peace." It brings us good tidings of great joy, it assures us that there is One mighty to save, One able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by Him; it tells the convinced and humble penitent of the redeeming love of Christ, who is the surety for the chief of sinners, and by it Jesus himself "preaches good tidings unto the meek, binds up the broken-hearted, proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, comforts all that mourn, appoints unto them that mourn in Zion, gives unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." From the curse of the law, from the sentence of death, from everlasting ruin, despair, and woe, Christ is made of God unto us redemption, as it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And again, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot." "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement

of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed," for "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The penalties due to our sins He took upon Himself; He made an adequate atonement to Divine justice for our transgressions, He "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." Yea, He has taken away the sin of the world, and by His death hath destroyed death, and by His rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. The Collect for this day beautifully describes Him to be "both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life." We have, therefore, abundant reason to pray to the God of all grace, "that we may always most thankfully receive such his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life."

And here, my reverend brethren, from this subject both preachers and hearers may well pause and ask their own hearts,—are we in Christ Jesus? Yea, what says the apostle?—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Indeed he further tells us, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." If such was the declaration of St. Paul, surely it requires our most serious consideration and fervent prayer at a throne of grace, that we may be found amongst that thrice happy number who are in Christ Jesus, and to whom "He is made of God wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." We might here observe, that to be enabled rightly to divide the word of life is no easy task, insomuch as that which may edify one may harden another, and what may be necessary to arouse the hardened sinner may bruise the broken reed. We have, however, in the epistles of St. Paul and his fellow apostles, an admirable model, by which we may frame our several discourses, as in these epistles we may generally discern one uniform mode of procedure—the doctrine is explained, and its truth established, after which are deduced the practical conclusions which are its natural results. Now if we be desirous of imitating these "wise master-builders," and to promote the edification of those to whom we are appointed to minister, we must not amuse our hearers with dry dissertations, but faithfully declare the whole counsel of God in the most affectionate manner, pointing out our insufficiency even to think a good thought, our need of the righteousness of Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith, and the only foundation of our hopes for time and eternity, leading our flocks in green pastures, till both minister and flock are removed to those more substantial joys which are the promised reward of such as live by the faith of the Son of God, under the constant guidance of His Holy Spirit; and to them who are thus in Christ Jesus, He is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.

Finally, let us all remember, that we can never obtain these invaluable blessings in any other way, that we can never derive them from any other source. It is only by being in the Beloved, that we can be accepted of God. Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Him;" Jesus is the True Vine, and unless we are branches of that vine, unless we are abiding in Him in vital and spiritual union, we cannot be in that narrow way which leadeth unto life eternal. Let none deceive themselves in relation to these plain and momentous truths, which deeply concern us all, as to our state for eternity. To have a well founded hope of enjoying hereafter the mansions of the blessed, we must be in this vale of tears "new creatures in Christ," we must flee to Him "from the wrath to come;" and for our encouragement we are divinely assured that He waits to be gracious, and "will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." Oh!

then, with the eye and with the heart of faith, let us "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Let us wrestle, like Jacob, at a throne of grace for more and more of His Spirit, let us prostrate ourselves at the foot of our Redeemer's cross; yea, and take up that cross, and follow Him through evil report and through good report. Let us become His disciples and servants, not merely in name and profession but in deed and in truth, and thus shall a blessing rest upon our souls in time and in eternity.

Yes, my reverend brethren, we know that all things shall work together for good to them who are in Christ Jesus, and that He is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. To preach Christ crucified, is therefore the one employment of all His ministers; to debase the creature and exalt the Saviour is the bounden duty of all, and to proclaim to sinful and ruined man, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" that "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief;" that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" and live. May these Divine declarations take deep root in the hearts of all our hearers, and bring forth fruit an hundred fold, to the praise and glory of God. May our testimony to "the truth as it is in Jesus," be more fully credited and more deeply experienced by our respective flocks; and then, when feeling our own insufficiency, we shall be cheered by the consolation that we are delivering our message to those who are no strangers to prayer, and can, therefore, adopt the words of the apostle to the church of Thessalonica, and say, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith." Well then may the prophet exclaim, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Moreover, the Lord further declares by the prophet, that His word shall not return unto Him void, but that it shall "accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it;" to which He further adds for our encouragement, "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Yes, here the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for you, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and hereafter you shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father. Under all trials and afflictions you shall be supported, comforted, and blessed. It is true, you may be troubled on every side, but you shall not be distressed; you may be perplexed, but you shall not be in despair; you may be persecuted, but you will not be forsaken; you may be cast down, but you shall not be destroyed; the tempest may rage around you, the winds may roar, and the billows may foam, but be of good courage; "with Christ in the vessel," you may "smile at the storm." "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D.

PREACHED IN ST. SEPULCHRE'S CHURCH, SKINNER STREET,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 29, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Girls' Parochial School.

"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death : I do not say that ye shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin : and there is a sin not unto death."—1 John v. 14—17.

SEVERAL vital and practical principles of the Christian religion are involved in this very important passage of Scripture, which occurs in the second lesson for this evening's service; and as I prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit when I directed my mind to the consideration of it, and was preparing for this discourse, so now do I pray that the same Holy Spirit may be with you, my dear brethren, to bless what shall here be said, to the edification of those whose hearts are already renewed by grace, and to the conversion of the impenitent.

Our attention is, in the first place, called to the duty of prayer. The whole subject of prayer is one of those many mysteries with which we are every day conversant, but the depth of which it is impossible to fathom. By prayer we mean, the asking of God to give us something of which we stand in need. Are there any persons—there may be some, I fear that there may be many of those here present—who are in the habit of neglecting this duty, who, though they do occasionally experience feelings of devotion, are not accustomed systematically and habitually to pray? If there be any such among you, the reason, my brethren, of your neglecting this duty is, that you have not been taught to regard prayer in the light of one of those means, by recourse to which you are to obtain some end you have in view, or some object which you desire to accomplish. You think, in your devotions, only of yourselves and of your own feelings,—not of some end to be accomplished by prayer, external to yourself; you think only of the good which praying does to yourself, and consequently you think you can only pray when you experience some devotional excitement of feeling. Devotional excitement is necessary to enable us to worship; but in our most dry and least excited moments we can pray. By worship we mean, the pouring forth of the heart to God: we can deliberately ask God, in our Saviour's name, at any time, to give us this thing or that, whether it be a temporal or a spiritual benefit—something "requisite and necessary" for the body or for the soul—of which we stand in need. Prayerless men are men who have no faith in prayer, when thus regarded as a means to an end, external to themselves—as a means by which, when

urged in the name of our Divine Intercessor, we may ward off some impending misfortune which we dread, or obtain some blessing which we desire. I state the fact : the consciences of those who are prayerless amongst us will bear witness to the truth of what I say.

The devil is of course deeply interested in preventing us from praying; and I know the argument which he suggests to prayerless men—an argument which men who, thinking themselves wise, are in fact the very reverse, are eager to adopt : “ God is omniscient, almighty, and all-merciful; he knows, therefore,” it is argued, “ what we want before we ask; He is able to grant it, and He will grant it if He sees fit.” Therefore it is concluded, modesty requires that we should not dictate to the All-wise, or distrust the All-merciful. Now, my brethren, it is always wrong to argue in this way; to say, such are the attributes of God, and therefore such and such must be the result. See to what it leads. God has revealed to us, blessed be His holy name, the fact that He is omniscient, almighty, and all-merciful; He consequently knows that we want food for the body; He is able to give us food from heaven, even as He gave manna from heaven to the Israelites; and therefore, they who adopt this kind of argument to which I refer, are bound to conclude, that men are not to sow the seed, or gather in the harvest, or labour for what they want. Are you prepared to do this? Are you prepared to forego exertion or labour, when you have any object to attain, on the ground that your exertions would be virtually a denial of the omnipotence or of the mercy of God? If you are not, then it is hypocrisy to argue this as an excuse for not having recourse to prayer. Nature proclaims and revelation declares, that man is placed under a peculiar dispensation of things, under which dispensation the Almighty does not always bring His omnipotence directly to bear upon the events of the world, but makes use of the agency of man, and acts through secondary causes. It is not for us, ignorant as we must be of the infinite, to reconcile the fact of human agency and the omnipotence of God; but acknowledging God to be almighty, and at the same time seeing that we have some control, though we know not precisely what, over the events of this world, we are to exert ourselves whenever our exertion seems likely to be successful; and yet we are to rest assured, that in the end the will of God will be accomplished.

As far as our exertions are concerned, it is not necessary to dwell upon this subject. We exert ourselves instinctively whenever we have an object in view, or a danger to avert. But, my brethren, look back at the past. How very often you have exerted yourselves to attain some object which you had much at heart, and yet have failed! You have done what others under similar circumstances have done, and you have failed; or else, when they have failed, you have succeeded. Although you will not win the race unless you run—although you will not gain the battle unless you fight—although you will not obtain competence or wealth until you act with worldly wisdom—yet, what saith the preacher? “ I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.” What men call “ time and chance” happeneth to all; but the words “ time and chance” have no meaning, unless they mean the providence of God. God, who gives us some power over future events, in so doing, under the present dispensation, and to afford us freedom of action, restraining (as it were) His omnipotence, putting limits (as it were) to His omnipotence, nevertheless does sometimes, and not unfrequently, so directly interfere, that the wisest

measures are frustrated, and events the most unexpected come to pass. Now, as, on the one hand, God sets limits to his omnipotence, in order that man may be free to act, so has He revealed to us the fact that He will directly interfere with the course of human actions or events, in answer to true prayer. Do you desire anything? Labour for it. Are you labouring for anything? Pray that your labours may be successful. Both in acting and in praying you are surrounded by mystery; there are many things which you cannot understand; but there certainly is nothing more mysterious in the fact that by your prayers you may move the Omnipotent to interfere, than there is in that other fact, that by your actions you may in some degree promote the glory, or oppose the will of God.

My brethren, let us be earnest, let us be systematic in our prayers; that is, in telling to our God our wishes and our wants, and in imploring His aid. He encourages all who are justified by faith in Christ to approach "with boldness" that throne which is a throne of grace as well as of glory; to speak to Him as children to a loving parent, and to specify minutely whatever we desire at His hands. Even as we are laborious in the duties of our calling, we can be laborious, we can be regular, in our prayer. We cannot at all times excite our devotional fervour; it is not in our power to kindle when we will those rapturous feelings in our soul, with which in our happier moments we worship Him who makes that soul His temple; but we can deliberately, day by day, tell to our Father which is in heaven what our wants are; and we can at the same time entreat our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, sitting at the right hand of power, is our only Mediator and Intercessor, to intercede for us, that the favour we seek may be obtained, and that our wants may be redressed. He will intercede for His praying servants; and ye amongst us, beloved brethren, who are accustomed to pray, can bear witness that He often gives more than we desire, and certainly much more than we can ever deserve. He often confers a present grace; He sends His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to the praying soul, and in the midst of prayer the fervour of devotion oftentimes comes upon us; the joy of the Holy Ghost is singularly experienced, and the worshipping heart realizes the fact that there is a communion of saints, a communion of sanctified souls, with their God in the bliss of heaven. It is heavenly bliss of which the worshipper partakes, when vocal prayer having ceased, he is overwhelmed by unutterable thoughts.

But do we, when we pray, require the interposition of an Intercessor? Is it necessary not only to plead the merits of the Lamb of God, but also to seek His intercession? Then, my brethren, learn from this, that if we desire God to interfere in our behalf, whether to avert evil or to obtain some object of desire, it is not the careless expression of a wish that will suffice; it is earnest, deliberate, persevering prayer. Suppose you wish to obtain some object, attainable by human exertion, do you attain it by one day's labour? The exertion, the systematic labour of months, of years, of a whole life-time even, may be necessary. If, after a few days' labour, you have not attained your desire, you do not immediately renounce the pursuit; you may obtain by perseverance what for a long time may elude your grasp. Is there anything that you do earnestly desire of God? any grace, any gift, any virtue? You must not be disappointed if you obtain it not at once; perseverance in prayer is as necessary as perseverance in labour. A man in the court of a temporal sovereign, when earnestly seeking a benefit, is said to prosecute a suit; and a constant suit in the court of Heaven every true suppliant has, with Jesus as his Intercessor. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who when on earth spake a

parable to this end, "that men ought always to pray and not to faint," has taught us through Jacob that prayer is like a wrestle, that the Omnipotent so lowers His strength as to permit His children to wrestle with Him in prayer.

Continue, then, my brethren, in prayer, and watch unto the same with thanksgiving. "If we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him." This is our faith; whether we receive immediately what we desire, or not, if we watch unto prayer, what we desire will in the end be accomplished, or at least the equivalent will be vouchsafed to us.

But there is another mystery connected with prayer, which is referred to in our text. My brethren, by your labours others are benefited as well as yourselves; Nay, more, whether you intend it or not, you cannot do good to yourselves, generally speaking, without doing good to others also. We are here assembled, a promiscuous congregation, taken from different classes of society, and occupying different stations in life: and to what is this difference in our several positions to be attributed? In a great degree to the conduct, good or ill, of our parents, or their ancestors; to the conduct, that is to say, good or ill, of other persons. Their conduct has had an influence on our fate. Our condition is in some respect different from what it once was, either better or worse; we are better or worse off than our parents were. This has been occasioned by our own conduct, good or ill; but still, though much, under God, has depended on ourselves, much has depended on others. A good and wise parent enables his son to commence life with advantages greater than he himself possessed; and on the other hand, the son of a wicked parent is involved in the misery which that wicked parent has brought not on himself alone, but on his family also. A parent makes money, or saves money, because he knows that by so doing his children will be benefited. It is to the wisdom, and in some instances to the self-denial of a parent, that most of us can trace the receiving of that good education which has laid the foundation of our present virtue. In every department of life, every generous spirit labours for the advantage of others, as well as for the benefit of himself.

Now, here again, what is true with regard to action is true also with regard to prayer. Others, as well as ourselves, we are taught by Scripture, may be benefited by our prayers. If it were not so, why did St. Paul so affectionately and so often pray for his converts? "Always," as he saith in the first chapter to the Philippians, "Always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy." Why in his humility did he so earnestly desire the prayers of his converts in return? If it were not so, why did St. Paul direct that "supplications and prayers should be made for kings and for them in authority"—yea, "for all men?" It is because other men are benefited by our prayers; the Queen, the magistrates, the clergy, the catholic church, the "afflicted and distressed in mind, body, or estate," that the liturgy of the Church of England consists mainly in supplications for others, in supplications in behalf of national institutions and public characters.

My brethren, you have some of you, doubtless, when lying on the bed of sickness, racked by pain, and through pain being unable to lift up your mind to prayer, you have yourselves felt the deep comfort of having the prayers of the church offered by the bed-side for you, others doing what you are incapacitated to do for yourself. Some of us there are, who know by experience how overpowering is the feeling of gratitude when we receive a kindness from one whose kindness we are unable to requite by our actions. And you know the comfort, the great comfort that there is in going in secret to your heavenly Father, and seeking from Him

an everlasting blessing upon your human benefactor. Who is there that has not found comfort in praying for a sick or sorrowing friend, when from absence, or from other circumstances, he has been unable to minister towards his consolation or to relieve his wants? There is consolation in feeling that in adding our prayers to the physician's skill, we contribute with him to the restoration of the afflicted. It is by his prayers, not less than in his preaching, that the pastor benefits his flock; and through the prayers of the faithful the hands of the pastor are strengthened and supported in the midst of a gainsaying world and "many adversaries," even as the hands of Moses, when they were heavy in the day of battle, by Aaron and Hur. And you who are parents, you know, if you believe in God, how fervent is a parent's prayer, when he first launches the child of his affections upon the ocean of a troublous world. And some of us may know the consolation that comes to the heart from that faith which leads us confidently to hope that a wandering child of error may be brought back through a parent's constant suit at the throne of grace, to the flock of Christ and to the narrow path.

But here another privilege relating to prayer is brought under our notice; and occurring as it does in that second lesson of this evening's service, which I am now seeking to expound, we must not pass it by, though it may lead us to a short digression upon the nature of sin. St. John, in the text, tells us that there are certain persons, or persons under certain circumstances, for whom we are not to pray—for whom it is needless to pray. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." This point we have already considered. Here we have the fullest authority for that which I have been pressing upon your attention—intercessory prayer. But the apostle adds, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye shall pray for it." What is meant by "a sin unto death," and "a sin not unto death?"

Now, my brethren, we must as Protestants deny, and deny *in toto*, that division of sins into mortal and venial which is at the root of some of the worst errors—we may say, even of the idolatry itself—of the church of Rome. The Romish church asserts that some sins are in their nature venial. That is to say, though they are sins, you may commit them again and again, a thousand times, and yet not deserve eternal punishment, or lose the favour of God. Their great controversialist, Bellarmine, affirms, that all the venial sins in the world put together can never do what one mortal sin can do; that is, merit eternal damnation. Now this is just as reasonable as to affirm that a ship can be sunk by a weight of lead, but that the same ship cannot be sunk by the same weight in sand. But, my brethren, we "have not so learned Christ." We cling the closer to Christ, the only Saviour; we rely exclusively upon His merits, because one and the same sentence is pronounced against all sins. "There is no such thing," says an ancient father, St. Basil, "as a little sin." Sin is a transgression of God's law. Whatever God forbids, if we do it, that is sin. To eat of the fruit of a tree, if forbidden—to touch the curtains of the ark, if forbidden—to gather sticks after a certain hour, if forbidden—or to neglect the slightest command, when the command comes from God,—these are sins; they are transgressions against God's law, and every transgression of God's law is damnable. Sin, though a finite action, is an offence against the infinite Lord God, and is deserving of infinite, that is, eternal vengeance. There is a curse upon "every one that continueth not in all things which

are written in the book of the law to do them." "The wages of sin is death;" and as St. James instructs us, "He who offends in one point is guilty of all." A transgression of the Creator's will, whether intentional or unintentional, must, except by Divine interposition, be an injury to the creature. We are to look at sin in this point of view, but we are not exclusively to regard it as the damage which it does to our own souls. By ignorance or by negligence we may do infinite mischief without intending it. You may, without intending mischief, and merely for exercise or amusement, cast a stone from a sling, and by so doing you may cause the death of a fellow-creature. Archbishop Abbott aimed at a deer, and he killed a man. You see, then, if you carry up your thoughts to the invisible world, how by our ignorance and by our negligence we may be the cause of confusion and mischief among the works of creation, to an extent which is quite inconceivable.

Again: you can understand how a creature may, from its very nature, be so odious, so mischievous, so deadly in its venom, so sure to injure on the recurrence of opportunity, that its destruction may be deemed a public benefit. Let a viper appear in a house: would not the hand of every one be raised against it? Would you ever rest until the reptile was crushed? A creature thus odious in the sight of all the pure intelligences, the holy angels who surround the throne of God, must fallen man have seemed to be, when in his nature he became unable to obey the will of Him, in submission to whose will the happiness of creation consists. Sin, any sin, any infraction of the divine law, must appear odious to them—so odious that they must have regarded the annihilation of the offender as a blessing and a boon; until a wonder, greater than that of creation itself, was effected, by which a poor sinner might be spared, the effects of his sin averted, and eternal justice be secured. The everlasting Son of the Father, God the Son, the second person of the eternal Trinity, came down from the majesty on high, and God from everlasting assumed our nature, and as the God-man suffered, body and soul; He suffered, He was agonized, He was crucified; He "died for our sins and rose again for our justification;" and He has thus declared what is the infinite mercy of our God—(oh! poor sinners as we are, how grateful must we be for this!)—the infinite mercy of God, who hath devised the means by which we can be brought back to our reconciled Maker. But not this only: He hath, by the tremendous sacrifice of the cross, declared the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of all sin, of any infraction of the divine law. Considered in itself, humanly speaking, the mere eating of the forbidden fruit was a little thing; but that act was an act of disobedience against the infinite Lord God—it involved a ruin upon a whole race of creatures, which nothing but the blood of God himself could avert; and woe, indeed, to those who in opposition to Christ himself, and therefore taking the position of Anti-christ, say of any sin that it is light or trivial!

But St. John instructs us, that although "all unrighteousness" (as I have just shown) "is sin,"—all sin (as we have seen) being in its very nature not venial, but damnable,—"there is a sin not unto death." The church, also, in the liturgy, directs us to pray that we may be delivered "from all deadly sin;" which implies that there are some sins which are not deadly. The Scriptures speak of some sins which may be compared to a gnat, while others are compared to a camel—some to a beam, and others to a moat—some to wood, and some to straw and stubble; and our Lord himself made a distinction in the nature of sin, when He affirmed that the sin of Judas was greater than the sin of Pilate. Yes, my brethren, a distinction of sin we all admit; what we protest against is, the distinction of sin

which leads men to suppose, that there can be any sin venial in itself, any sin that requires less than the blood of Christ to eradicate it, any sin not, considered in itself, mortal and damnable. And this is not a mere dispute about words ; it goes to the very vitals of the Christian religion. If venial sins are, in their very nature, different from mortal sins, so that he who is guilty only of venial sins is not accounted by God as a sinner, a man may be justified then by his works, which is contrary to the assertions of Scripture. Committing no mortal sin, and venial sin being no offence against God, he may perform works of supererogation ; free from mortal sin, he may by his inherent righteousness be justified ; all which is directly contrary to the truth of the Gospel and salvation as it is in Jesus. But, my brethren, while we reject this erroneous distinction between sins, we nevertheless contend, that there are to certain persons sins “not unto death”—that there are sins not deadly to those who are justified by faith in Christ. And is there any inconsistency here? Would there be any inconsistency, if on entering a prison we were to say to the offender—“Though you are condemned to death, and justly condemned to death, yet intercession hath been made for you with the sovereign, and you will not die?” It would be one thing to go to him and to say, “There is no penalty attached to your crime—that which has been laid to your charge is not a crime, and therefore you have no sin, and because innocent ought to be discharged ;” and another, and a very different thing to say, “Though by the law the penalty of death is attached to your crime, yet through the mercy of the sovereign the penalty, in your case, through the special intercession of a friend, will be remitted.” In the latter case, the person receives as a favour what, in the former case, he can demand as an act of justice. My brethren, be not deceived ; your very infirmities—the utterance even of a hasty word—your negligences, your ignorances, your unintentional infractions of the divine law—all these would be your ruin, your destruction, if you were to seek to be justified by your works, if you were so to stand on your own merits or deserts ; for every transgression of the law is in itself a mortal, deadly sin. Hence it is, my brethren, that in zeal for the salvation of souls we entreat you to come to Jesus, the only Saviour, and to seek salvation through His intercession.

But to you who by faith have come to Christ—to you who are one with Christ—these infirmities of the flesh, deplored as they are, causing you always to be penitent, always humbling you to the dust—these infirmities, in the course of correction, are not your will, because while you acknowledge them to be deadly in themselves, and worthy of damnation, you kneel, not as saints but as penitents before your God, and say, “Spare me, for Jesus is my Saviour ; let me be accounted holy, notwithstanding my many short-comings ; Jesus, I plead His merits and clothe myself in His righteousness, and seek for the Spirit, to crucify the whole body of sin.” These we call not venial sins, but infirmities. By infirmities we mean unintentional sins, the sins of invincible negligence, ignorance or weakness, which are not in themselves pardonable, though the penitents, by whom they are committed, are through the intercession of Christ continually pardoned.

But is there any one here present, who lives in the acknowledged, wilful transgression of any one of the commandments, or of any of the known laws of God ? Is there such an one ? Every sin of that man is “a sin unto death.” He is spiritually dead—“dead in trespasses and sins.” The Spirit, “done despite unto,” hath departed, or is departing from him. In Jesus that man has no intercessor. Oh ! if there be such an one among us, may God in his infinite mercy, for Jesus Christ’s sake, grant him grace to give heed to what I now say to him, in the name

of the living God—"Turn ye, and live." Ask of God, upon thy bended knees this night, to turn thine heart.

The mark of a converted heart is this—that sinners though at best we be, we do not allow ourselves in any one known sin, or in the transgression of any recognized duty. They whose hearts are right with God, though conscious of the indwelling of sin, and consequently not daring to seek justification by their works, are nevertheless happy—happy in the conviction that their infirmities, deadly in themselves, for their Saviour's sake will not be deadly to them.

And now, my brethren, you see what the apostle means, in that portion of our text which has given rise to this digression. It is useless to pray for those, for whom Christ will not intercede; and the Lord Christ will not intercede for that man who deliberately perseveres in known sin. Our prayers can only benefit, by assisting those who are praying for themselves; and no one can really pray, who is not at the same time endeavouring to accomplish what he prays for by the corresponding actions. We can assist a lame man, when he is striving to walk; but our assistance is useless to him who is determined to wallow in the mire; we can only exhort that man to bestir himself and extricate himself. As in our actions, so will it be in our prayers. By prayer, those who are under grace can assist gracious souls: to the ungodly we must address our exhortations. But even with respect to them, there is one sense in which we can render them service by our prayers. For a man in deadly sin—that is, a man persevering in deadly sin—we have no right to ask any blessing, temporal or spiritual, while he remains in that awful condition. If he be sick, and he tells us he will not repent, we only waste words when we ask for his restoration unto eternal life; for eternal life cannot be his until he repent. But this we may do: we may entreat our God in his behalf, that He may vouchsafe to him fresh calls to repentance, and further opportunities for conversion. As far as in you lies, to provide him with these opportunities is your duty; and it is lawful to pray for what it is lawful to attempt. If there be any one in this congregation, who came here this day an unconverted character, and if he goes hence with a converted heart—a heart turned in penitence to God—(God Almighty grant that such may be the case with him!)—the fact, my penitent brother, of thy having been brought to this place this day, to hear this word of exhortation,—the fact that this word of exhortation has spoken through the power of the Holy Ghost to thy heart,—this may be in answer to the prayer of some unknown, some pious friend.

Now, my brethren, we are brought to that further principle, with regard to prayer generally, to which (as I have said) the words of our text direct our special attention. The principle is this,—that before we ask anything of God, we carefully consider the question, whether we have a right to ask it. In the words of our text, when we pray we are to consider whether what we ask for is in accordance with the will of God. Prayer is a sacred, solemn, and important business, and we are not to enter upon a course of prayer, or to make a lengthened suit before God, without seeking to ascertain whether what we ask for is according to His will. This is a principle which we deduce from that which we have just been considering. Is it a perplexing question, this? It certainly requires trouble; it requires consideration; it requires thought. But you obtain a general answer to the question, "What may I pray for?" by obtaining an answer to another question,—“What may I legitimately seek by my labour?” What one person may legitimately seek by labour, another person may not. Suppose the case of a sovereign, deposed by a rebellion among his people. He may legitimately seek a restoration to his

kingdom, and he may therefore pray to God to grant him an earthly crown. But should the prayer be proffered by one of us, it would be worse than folly, since God has not placed a crown within the reach of our exertion. It would be lawful for a general officer to seek the command of an army, but for a youthful subaltern to do so would be folly. His desire would only legitimately extend to the next step of promotion; and for this he might exert himself with success. In things spiritual, the ordinary Christian may desire to abound in grace; but if we were to pray that we might have the grace of an apostle, we should not be acting according to the will of God. By the circumstances under which we are providentially placed,—by our natural dispositions—by our advantages and disadvantages, God indicates his will, as to the object of our exertions, and if of our exertions, so also of our prayers. Some things are clearly within the reach of our industry; for these we may labour; and if we may labour, we may also pray. Some things we may wish for, but they are beyond the reach of our talents, or by external circumstances they may be rendered unattainable. If we aim at things beyond our reach, we become disappointed and unhappy; and if the things at which we aim are much above our reach, we are accounted insane. You see, then, that you are to act according to God's will in your labour; and what His will is, with regard to your prayers, you may thus by due attention and forethought ascertain.

For the poor children of the Parochial Girls' School in this parish you are called upon to pray,—to pray that they may be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” It would be well at certain times—say one day in every week—to pray for this, and for your other parochial charities. As you pray, you would say to yourselves,—“What is the use of praying, unless there be corresponding actions?” Let our prayers and our actions correspond. Pray, and you will be subscribers to these schools; give in a proper spirit, and you will pray. When we ask you to give this day, we ask you to give more than the sum you came prepared to give; we ask you to give more than you usually do at charity sermons; because, “without a large additional number of subscribers, and very liberal contributions, this really valuable charity must cease to exist, and a large number of the poorest children of the parish be deprived of the means and benefits of a sound religious education.” Sad alternative this would be—which you will, I trust, avert. I pray God that so it may be.

But not now only—at all times, my brethren, let us lay to heart the instruction conveyed to us with the second lesson in this evening's service, which, because it has been providentially brought under our consideration, I have sought to expound. In all things, my brethren, let us make known our wants to God. Let us pray for “the things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as for the soul.” Let us pray according to the will of God; not trusting in our own merits, but in the merits and mercy of our dearest Lord and only Saviour, Jesus Christ. And then, depend upon it, through His intercession our prayers will be heard, our pardon sealed from heaven, and our acceptance there secured.

THE SIGHING OF THE PRISONER.

A Sermon,

REV. W. C. LE BRETON, A.M.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. OLAVE'S, SOUTHWARK.
ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 22, 1849.

"Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee; according to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die."—Psalm lxxix. 11.

THERE may have been a primary allusion intended by the psalmist in these words to the captive mourning under a sense of bondage or apprehensive of a violent death in expiation of his offences. There is nothing, however, in the language here used which would seem to indicate the necessity for such a supposition. On the contrary, it would appear from its structure, to have an entirely spiritual meaning, the image of the criminal deploring the loss of liberty, or anticipating the forfeiture of his life, being employed to portray to us the condition of men in general, while they continue in the flesh, and have that sentence passed upon them, that "it is appointed unto them once to die." In this light, therefore, we shall consider the text this morning. The propriety of styling the sons of Adam prisoners can scarcely fail to be discerned when we remember the restraint which the immortal spirit endures whilst it inhabits its present earthly house, or recollect the hardships to which many of our race are subjected, or, once more, the degrading slavery to which they reduce themselves by serving their own lusts, and refusing to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ would make them free. Now in whichever of these senses men are prisoners, it is clear that they have occasion and that they are wont to sigh, and that it is the part of the pious and faithful believer in God to bear this in mind, and inasmuch as he has put on bowels of compassion to say, as well for others as for himself, "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee." Three things, then, are suggested by the first clause of the passage before us, upon each of which we shall proceed to offer a few observations.

The first is, that all who live in this world are prisoners. St. Paul teaches us this in the epistle to the Romans. He therein speaks not only of the creature but of the whole creation as groaning under a want of freedom. And there is indeed something in the aspect of the visible universe, and of its dumb or vocal, animate or inanimate, tenantry and productions, which establishes this fact to the perfect conviction of the contemplative mind. Flowers and fruits, leaves and blossoms, birds and animals, and the earth itself their common parent and sustainer, wait for a deliverance from vanity and change. But above all, the soul which God's grace has touched makes its possessor sensible that he is a prisoner upon earth. Those hard struggles which his spirit daily maintains against the encroachments of the flesh,—that temporary inability which he frequently experiences, to mount up as with wings of eagles into the bright, effulgent beams of

the Sun of Righteousness,—that still more melancholy hovering around weak and beggarly sources of felicity, after the inexhaustible fountains and living waters of celestial joy have been disclosed to him,—oh! is not any one of these sufficient to show that he is in truth a prisoner, though happily a prisoner of hope? Other prisoners too there are to whom we have already briefly adverted, but of whom it becomes us to speak for one short moment again. There are those, for example, who hear the voice of the oppressor, and to whom the look of sympathy and the expression of kindness are alike unknown. Existence to them has no pleasure; shattered health, irremediable poverty, and appalling privations being almost its ordinary characteristics. Far better their lot, however, if they are taught by it to prepare for that delightful land where the “prisoners sing together,” than of those who are prisoners by reason of their own corrupt will and depraved affections; who, disesteeming the glorious liberty of the children of God, willingly remain immured in the dungeons of guilt, and tied and bound with the chains of their iniquities.

We would go on to remark, secondly, that these various prisoners have their respective sorrowful sighings. Of what import the griefs of the believer are, none but those who have inherited like precious faith with him are able to tell, for none but converted hearts can measure or comprehend the bitterness which they alone who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit know. But *they* can imagine “the groanings which cannot be uttered;” *they* can feel for the disciple of Christ, who, after the manner of St. Paul, longs to be delivered from the body of this death; *they* can compassionate his cry, “O wretched man that I am;” *they* can understand and pity his sad acknowledgment, “that to will is present with him, but how to perform that which is good he finds not, and that though he delights in the law of God after the inward man, he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members.” Again, the oppressed and desolate have their peculiar anguish. Even as that sound of woe which went up from the land of Egypt, ere leviathan was subdued and given to be meat for the people of the wilderness; or as that wailing which ascended up to heaven from the expatriated Jews, who sat and wept beside the waters of Babylon, is there a dirge of distress upborne to the throne on high, which enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from a vast multitude of neglected or despised sufferers. The fatherless child seeking parental help in the cherished and valued friend of the author of his being, but seeking it in vain; the widow mutely imploring the assistance of the next of kin to her deceased lord, but imploring it to no purpose; the old domestic of long approved integrity, suddenly dismissed without the least testimony of regard or proof of interest in his welfare, by his austere and selfish master; the female, urging on her needle with an overtasked energy, and earning in return but a sorry and incompetent remuneration; all, all conspire together in raising one awful and prolonged note of tribulation and agony. Less accounted of, but not therefore less real, is the sighing of the prisoner, who is in the custody of sin and Satan. It is true that we cannot catch its utterance so plainly, nor understand its import so thoroughly, in this case as in the others that have been mentioned; for the dazzling outside that wealth presents, and the seductive garbs that sensuality assumes, and the laughter and merriment with which the most insignificant of earthly pleasures invest themselves, prevent us from immediately discovering their utter hollowness and imperfection. And because the delusion is an agreeable one, which would lead us to believe that the promises of worldly allurements and temptations are always fulfilled,—because we cannot credit the invasions of care or of melancholy, where abundance reigns and gratifies every wish of every member of the

family, in whose behalf its manifold resources are applied,—because we cannot conceive that dark anxiety visits the occupant of a castellated house, or enters into the bosom of the owner of broad lands, extended forests and valleys, of grateful verdure and fertility,—because, I say, we either cannot, or will not, understand this, therefore do we not heed the sighing which yet we know, from their own confession, is involuntarily expressed by many a favoured votary of mammon and many a successful servant of iniquity; the sighing, for instance, of the hoarder of to him profitless gold, seeing that he has not the heart to use it himself, nor the benevolence to employ it for the advantage of others; the sighing again of the victim of lust and of intemperance, in whom desire has survived the means and the faculty of enjoyment. And, lastly, the sighing of the sinner, who in the midst of his evil rejoicing and debasing pursuits, which still are all that he can relish and appreciate, is aroused by sickness to a fear of instantly meeting his God and of instantly quitting the only treasures on which his heart is fixed.

Thirdly, then let it be observed, will the believer, conscious of these several sighings of the crowd of prisoners whom he sees all around him, pray to the Almighty that they may come before His everlasting presence. He will beseech God to listen to the supplications of the redeemed, and to hasten the arrival of the day when, their mouths filled with laughter and their tongues with joy, they shall find their adoption perfected, and their salvation accomplished. He will entreat the Father of mercies to look down with an eye of pity upon those who endure oppression, to assuage their tears, to answer their complaints, and to mitigate their troubles. And he will wait upon Him who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, that He may loose the prisoners—the prisoners, alas, not of hope, but of wretchedness and despair—that He may vouchsafe them the inclination to turn to the stronghold, and that by the blood of the covenant He may send them forth out of the pit wherein is no water. Let as many of you, my brethren, as are the followers of Christ cultivate this spirit—so becoming in a true servant of Christ—the spirit which has learnt to feel for others' woes, and to refer them in prayer to that alone Being who can scatter and disperse them. “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee.”

In the latter part of the text there is the following solemn request preferred, “According to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die.” Keeping to the order of the words, we shall review, first, the degree of protection solicited—“According to the greatness of Thy power;” secondly, the protection itself—“Preserve Thou;” and, thirdly, the objects of it—“Those that are appointed to die.”

“According to the greatness of Thy power;” it is thus that the psalmist frames his petition. For, indeed, what else could avail to render the aid for which he was offering up his supplications? Could man's help have been enough he, doubtless, might have afforded it; but “there is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; and there is no discharge in that war.” Only God can give the spirit and delay its return to Him the Creator and Disposer of it. Only God can send the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who can whisper peace to the soul of dying man; who tells him that his earthly tabernacle shall be replaced “by a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” and that “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” Such is the greatness of God's power which is here prayed for. It is not merely the power which upholds the system of nature; it is not merely the power which continues the grant of animal life; but it is the power which, renewing us besides in our inward man, withdraws all fear of dissolution and the grave; it is the power of weaning the devout Christian from

the things of this world, and of setting his affections on the things of a better. And who but God has this power—this greatness of power? How often if he forgets it and strives in his own strength, and by his own arguments and persuasions, to move a sick person to meditation upon the riches and glory of redemption, shall the minister discover the weak and inefficient instrument that he is. How often shall anxious friends, attempting to introduce religion into their conversation with those about to be removed from the earth, be forced to acknowledge that they have not the ability to implant the necessary taste and liking for the truths of the Gospel? No! no more than we can keep back the soul of which the Almighty has demanded the surrender; no more than we can retain amongst us the friend whom we love, or the relation that is dear to us, unless the greatness of God's power concurs with our wishes; no more without it can we rob death of its sting and the grave of its victory, or prove to the expiring sons and daughters of our race that to depart and to be with Christ is far better than to abide in the flesh.

The expression "preserve Thou," may be explained in two ways. It may either signify, "Spare them a little that they may recover their strength before they go hence and be no more seen;" or it may mean, "Cause them to keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last." The desire that the period of probation should be enlarged, and that the opportunities of preparing to meet their God should be lengthened, to those who are in peril of death but who are in no wise ready to encounter the last enemy, is perfectly scriptural. And frequently is it right to ask, though at the same time with the most entire resignation to God's will in the matter, that they who went wrong before they were troubled, should be permitted to show the fruits and the sincerity of their repentance, that they who have been rendered sick through the Lord's smiting them for their transgressions should be made whole, and sinning no more should have no evil thing again happening unto them. Preserve Thou, we would say, moreover, the heedless and unthinking breaker of God's law; preserve Thou the violator of His commandments, the despiser of His grace and of His covenant. Preserve Thou them; terminate not yet their acceptable time or day of salvation; not till they have known the way of peace, not till they have looked to Jesus, and mourned for Him whom they have pierced; not till they have pursued holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, let the summons which shall require their soul be issued, or the night in which no man can work enshroud their habitation; not till they have been taught to give glory to God, let their feet stumble upon the dark mountain, or the loneliness of the sepulchre conceal them.

But "preserve Thou," as it respects the saint, has a different signification. For him also, indeed, we would ask the prolongation of life, that the beauty and utility of his example may not cease among us; but for him we would more especially pray that he may be preserved from falling,—preserved, also, from disquieting doubts and from anxious perplexities at the very moment in which Satan is most busy in endeavouring to raise them; and that his faith may be vigorous and his hope clear in the hour when he is called to put off his tabernacle and to stand before the God of gods in Sion. 'Preserve Thou him'—such would be our intercessory petition in his behalf—'preserve Thou him in the faith which reminds us that we are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, and that we have no continuing city here. Preserve Thou him in the virtues which should adorn God's people, in the charity without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Him, and in the deeds of alms-giving which, as done from singleness of heart and from a principle of piety, shall not be forgotten before the Almighty. Preserve Thou him in the spirit that is careful for nothing, but in prayers and supplications with thanksgiving makes its requests

known unto God. Preserve Thou him in the peace which shall keep his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Let him not want, the Lord Jesus Christ being his Shepherd, but let him be led by Him to green pastures and beside still waters; and, at last, when bidden to enter upon the dark valley of the shadow of death let him experience the comforting influence of that rod and staff which shall guide him to fields where none shall make him afraid, where the wolf disturbs not the flock of the great Shepherd of the sheep, and there is neither hurt nor destruction in all the holy mountain of the Lord.'

And who are those that are "appointed to die?" The phrase may suggest to some minds the picture of the criminal whose life is demanded by the outraged laws of his country; who, sentenced to death, sees the brief interval between him and eternity gradually contracting, and the moment that shall hurry him into the presence of his Maker rapidly approaching; who, with eye undimmed and strength unabated, is told to prepare himself for that fearful but not undue punishment which, proceeding upon the express, plain declaration of the book of God, "that whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," executes upon him, without hesitation, the command of the Almighty. But what will the words, "appointed to die," represent to the reflecting Christian? They will bring before him that ever-memorable eve when the Lord God coming down to visit our first parents in the garden of Eden heard from their own lips the trembling acknowledgment, that they had eaten of the tree of which He had told them not to eat; and when, in the character of a judge who could not permit the disparagement that had been done to his high behest to pass unavenged, He proclaimed that they should return unto the ground out of which they had been taken, for dust they were and unto dust should they return; that is, that they and their posterity had now forfeited the gift of immortality, and must regard death as a penalty that could not be evaded, the tomb as a home that could not be escaped, and mourners going about the streets for them and for others as a woe that should know no end, until the dawning of that day in which the curse shall be abolished, death destroyed, and a tree of life, whose leaves shall be for the healing of the nations and which shall bear all manner of fruit, shall be revealed to the perfected spirits as they walk together in "solemn troops and sweet societies" in the paradise of God.

We will, however, enter a little more particularly into the terms "appointed to die." For generalities are almost always ineffective, and seldom produce any practical result. Those, then, who have been struck with sickness, in whom decay has commenced its work, and in whose countenance and features are clearly legible the traces of coming dissolution, should be admonished of this, should be warned to set their house in order, for that they shall die and not live. Instances of mortality in cases similar to their own should be dwelt upon before them, and there should be a firm, albeit not an unmannerly nor an ungracious, exposition of the vanity of their supposing to hold their souls in life when life, with whom are the issues of life and death, has displayed all about them the unmistakable signals which announce the near approach of the king of terrors. And if everything fails to assure the sinking man of his neighbourhood to the sepulchre, pious friends should remember him in their prayers, and should say, "Preserve Thou those that are appointed to die." "They are not aware of their own state, O Lord; in vain has it been pointed out to them that they are standing on the verge of that land in which all the cares, and amusements, and occupations of this world are equally forgotten. They still cling to the expectation that Thou wilt add new years unto their fast waning life as foolishly as the condemned criminal, in whose offence are no mitigatory circumstances, anticipates a reprieve, or hopes at least for a temporary

respite. Teach them, then, O Father of mercies, according to the greatness of Thy power, that they are appointed to die, and that to die calmly and peacefully, God must be made their friend through Christ, the Holy Ghost their Sanctifier, and the answer of a good conscience be vouchsafed to them.'

But not only the sick are appointed to die. Many who are now blest with health and spirits are under the same sentence—a sentence which fever or accident shall suddenly execute. Many whom God's finger could unerringly distinguish for us, and for whom fond parents, ignorant that their appointed time is well nigh come, are devising paths of glory or preparing stations of wealth and of splendour (their sun having gone down while it was yet day), shall soon be seen in their place no more. Many whose ripening abilities at the school or the university are creating predictions of their future pre-eminence in the offices of church and state, shall never live to attain the vigour or the experience of manhood; the youthful would-be priest of God shall never reach the age at which he looks forward to preach with zeal and sedulity His word; the already clever and dexterous inquirer into the mysteries of the law shall never reach the age necessary ere he can become a practical handler and public expositor of its intricacies; the precocious admirer of the anatomy of the human frame shall never reach the age at which, in crowded theatres and among wondering and, perhaps, envying fellows in the same art, he might have been able to throw new light upon science or to furnish new remedies for the cure or prevention of some as yet unintelligible disease. But wherefore serves all this? It is to show to you who are among the healthiest, or strongest, or youngest here, that you should wait all the days of your appointed time until your change come, seeing that you are appointed to die, though when you know not, and that the doors of your prison-house in the flesh may be thrown open in the moment that you least expect, or, perhaps, least desire—the moment when you have neglected to recollect that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment."

THE PRESENT ASPECTS OF POPERY.

Speech

OF THE

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M.A.,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION,
HELD IN EXETER HALL, ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 9, 1849.

John Plumtre, Esq., M.P., in the Chair.

My Christian friends, I am not prepared to say that any other avocation than the attending a Protestant meeting would have induced me to return from Manchester at this interesting season of the year; nor should I indeed have been present on this occasion, had not our excellent Secretary taken some little advantage of an intimation that I gave, and advertised my name. I did not like it to appear that I had one shadow of Jesuitism about me, or even to seem to break faith with my Protestant friends; albeit, I was well aware that Mr. Foley from Ireland would make it quite superfluous for any additional speaker to come up from the North.

The resolution which I have to support directs our attention to two quarters—on the one hand to the encouragements that we may derive from the past, and on the other hand, to the stimulants to the duties that claim our attention at the present moment. To both of these topics I will very briefly advert. While there is much in the horizon of our country to excite our serious apprehensions, there are not wanting, thank God, tokens that though He is wroth with us, yet He will not let His whole displeasure arise against Protestant Britain. In the year that is past we can record a national protest against the threatened endowment of the Irish priesthood. I call it a national protest; for in the far north, in Yorkshire, the largest county of England, and in the far west, in Devonshire, that so nobly did its duty, the great question that turned the scale at the election was—"Endowment or no endowment of the Romish priesthood." Yorkshire gloriously gave the key-note, Devonshire has already echoed it, and I will venture to say, that if there had been a dissolution of Parliament and a general election in consequence, that key-note would have been re-echoed from three-fourths of the constituency of Great Britain. Already the moral influence of those decisions has been felt, in the cabinet and in the senate, and we hear no more whisperings about the endowment of the priesthood of Rome in Ireland. But, Mr. Chairman, let us not be lulled asleep by any such apparent calm. The reptile is scotched, but it is not killed; and the very same moral sentiment that scotched the reptile must crush the reptile's head, that it may never revive. Mark the conduct of Popery in England, and in Ireland too, in the prospect of such a measure. It is the conduct at one time of a meek, and gentle, and fawning suppliant; while at other times she exhibits herself in the attitude of a bold and daring challenger of her demands. We are told now, that the priesthood of Ireland will not have an endowment, if you grant it to them. I believe it. They will not have it till they can get it. I remember a little illustration that I borrow from my boyhood, that is just to the point. One day I had a piece of bread and butter, covered with honey, that as a child I was very much enjoying. A little favourite spaniel made a great many leaps and snaps at my bread and butter; but I was not at

all disposed to share it with him, and I only held it further from his reach. By-and-by the little animal adopted a different plan. He laid down at my feet, he put out his paws, he reposed his silken head between them, closed his eyes, feigning sleep most admirably, and actually began to snore. Thrown off my guard by this apt counterfeit of sleep, in a luckless moment I stooped down to pick up something from the ground, and the spaniel grasped at my bread and butter, and down it went. Now the priesthood of Ireland have acted the part of this spaniel: wishing to grasp at the endowment, they have made sundry attempts, by agitations and alarm, to gain it; England has defied these attempts; and now the priesthood of Rome to a large extent are endeavouring to act the spaniel, pretending to be asleep—as much as to say, ‘We will not have it if you will give it to us;’ but let English Protestantism fall asleep, and let her Majesty’s ministers bring the sop of endowment into near proximity with the olfactory nerves of the Romish priesthood in Ireland, and they will grasp at and swallow it.

There is another cheering feature in England—I wish I heard tidings, that this feature were more prominent in the metropolis; but I can certainly report well of the provinces—there is a more decided Protestant spirit rousing itself in the middle classes, and I am thankful to say, to a great extent, too, among the clergy of England. I am glad to say, that our Manchester Protestantism is not at a discount. The reporter of one of our Conservative newspapers when he was asked how it was that they had so changed their tactics and their tone with regard to Protestantism, said, “We dare not do otherwise—public opinion forces us along.” And I am thankful to say, that there is not a public assembly, be it called for the Church Missionary Society, for the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, or any other Society—there is no meeting where the Protestant chord does not vibrate more loudly and distinctly when touched, than any other chord, in the public mind and the public heart. To a certain extent this has been the case in London. I have remarked that when a speaker touches the Protestant string, it echoes from the hearts of the thousands in Exeter Hall, and they respond in the right manner. And will my reverend brethren around me pardon me when I say, that when the preacher touches the chord, the audience are ready to respond? I am thankful to say, that in Manchester very recently we tried the Protestant Christian feelings of the inhabitants, not merely on a platform of our own, where we have it all our own way, as we are told we have in Exeter Hall, but being challenged by the advocates of secular education—I have no doubt supported and urged on by Jesuits, for they are in the background of almost all such movements—we met them on a fair open platform of their own choosing, and by the good hand of God upon us we forced them to send our petition against their object, instead of their own; and with the corporate seal of the Mayor of Manchester attached to the petition, it has been presented to the House of Commons; praying that in this great Christian country no scheme of education may receive cognizance or support from the government of the land that is not based upon an entire and uncompromised Christianity.

I am thankful, too, to report, that in the provinces generally there is more of a deep awakening of the Protestant spirit. And if we are cheered on this side the Channel, by such tidings as these, we are still more cheered by what we hear from the other side; and Mr. Foley’s plain, powerful, graphic, honest, truth-telling and truth-proving speech, makes it absolutely impossible for any government or any statesman longer to deny the fact, that Ireland wishes to throw off the Papal yoke; and it will be a burning shame to England, if she tries

to rivet on the yoke. that an oppressed and outraged people are anxious to rend asunder and cast to the winds of heaven. My own conviction is, that long ere this Popery would not only have been tottering in Ireland, but falling to pieces, if England's money and England's ministers had not propped and buttressed up the wretched old fabric that is not worth supporting. I am perfectly satisfied, that but for such measures as the mis-called Emancipation Bill, the beginning of our evils; but for the National Education Bill, stereotyping Popery and educating the people of Ireland with Protestant money in principles that are diametrically in the face of Protestantism; and but for such measures as the grant to Maynooth, long ere this the fine peasantry of Ireland, cheated and abused as they have been, would have discovered the dark imposture, and swept the incubus of Ireland away from its fair surface, and she would have risen, great, glorious and free, to be the fairest heritage of the British nation and the fairest gem in Victoria's diadem.

Be assured of it, we are not merely guilty in supporting Popery in Ireland by means of our funds, but we are still more guilty in indorsing Popery in Ireland by our moral weight and sanction. Surely, if this great Protestant land pays for the education of the priesthood of Rome, in all the dark despotism, in all the pitiful mummeries, in all the drivelling superstitions, in all the godless sentiments that we have heard detailed to us as their teaching and their practice in Ireland—if the British Houses of Parliament give their thousands to indoctrinate and discipline and prepare the priesthood to go forth thus furnished to delude and to debase the people, the guilt of Britain is greater than the guilt even of the priesthood itself; for, as it has been well said, “the receiver is worse than the thief,” surely the aider, the abettor, the comforter, is worse than the thief—for the thief must live by his craft, but the aider, abettor and comforter has no such excuse, because England sins gratuitously, in the face of light, in the face of principle, in the face of a glorious Constitution, in the face of an open Bible, in the face of a Protestant church, in the face of a Queen that holds her throne by her Protestantism as her title.

Yes, I would to God—and I speak with all solemnity and with all kindness and clarity—that our Christian senators and our Christian peers, who frequently take part in meetings at Exeter Hall for the purpose of putting an end to idolatry in heathen lands, would ponder well how far they are consistent, how far they can reconcile it to Christian honesty and integrity, when in the high places of national assembly they give their vote and their cognizance and their sanction to grants made to support and inculcate and foster idolatry at home. I am perfectly satisfied that if Christian Protestant men were only consistent throughout—if they had the same voice for St. Stephen's and the House of Peers that they have for Exeter Hall and for the Protestants of Exeter Hall—if they would only all do their duty nobly, as our chairman (Mr. Plumptre) does, as Sir Robert Inglis does, as Lord Ashley does, and as Mr. Spooner does, we should never have such a betrayal of Protestant principle in high places as we have had. But when we have good men, Christian men, that are under such an hallucination that they can subscribe and vote, and plead, powerfully, earnestly, and sincerely in behalf of institutions to put down idolatry at the Antipodes, and yet can speak and sanction and vote for grants to perpetuate an idolatry worse than that of heathen lands not afar off but only across the Channel, in our own poor degraded sister island; when we have men acting thus, I tell you it weakens the moral power of Christian Protestantism, I tell you it damages the cause that is so dear to our hearts, and to theirs too. I would that they might have the scales taken from their eyes, and find that a Christian man must be the same in the House of Parlia-

ment that he is on the platform at Exeter Hall—that he must be the same among foes that he is among friends—the same in the high places of national debate that he is on his knees in the closet, or as he adores his God in the sanctuary. Thank God, that, to a certain extent at least, this principle is being more recognised. And will my reverend brethren around me pardon me if I again say, it is ours in the providence of God and the position we occupy to make such truths heard in the ears of the high and the low, the senator and the peasant? Be assured of it, treachery and perfidy and dishonesty begin in the sanctuary; “like priest like people;” and if the hierarchy and the clergy of the Church of England had done their duty in days gone by—if they had maintained the Protestant tone of the pulpit as they ought—if they had celebrated the Protestant services that are found in her prayer-book with the punctuality and the devotion they ought—if our bishops had examined their clergy on Protestant subjects, as they ought, and taken care that they were called of God before they went to the altar—if our universities had been Protestant universities in the highest sense of the word—if the young men, besides being indoctrinated in Aristotle and Socrates and Plato, had been indoctrinated in Jewel and Cranmer and Ridley and Latimer—if the clergy themselves, thus prepared and armed, had given a Protestant tone to the ministrations of the sanctuary, depend upon it we should have had different electors, different statesmen, and a different state of things. And if the apostasy began in the house of God, the reformation should begin there too; and it does one’s heart good when one now and then hears of a bishop daring in his lawn sleeves to preach nobly against Popery; it does one’s heart good to hear in an episcopal charge something said against Romanism. But, my Christian friends, we have not half enough of it; we are not to handle Popery as if it were something different from what it was in the dark ages, when our Saxon-words homilies were written; you have only to appeal to the encyclical letters of the present Pope—you have only to appeal to his demand for the sword of the warrior to maintain his tottering seat—you have only to refer to the dark and damning developments of the inquisition of Rome, to see that Popery, if changed, is only changed, as the Irishman said his neighbour was, “from worser to worser.” Be assured of it, the time is coming, when there must be no neutrality—when neither bishop, presbyter, nor deacon, no, nor any lay Christian either, can leave it doubtful to what party he belongs; for the watch-cry and the war-cry are gone forth—‘Who is on the side of Christ, and who is on the side of antichrist?’

There is another cheering feature. That caricature of Popery, that Popery under a hood, that Popery with its jealous face, that Popery that was the more dangerous because it had not the honesty to write its name on its brow, that Popery that we currently and popularly call Tractarianism, has to a large extent, I trust, been, if not crushed, at least forced into the background in the Church of England. Be assured of it, if it had not been for the moral feeling of the men of England, and especially of the lay people of England, against Tractarianism—if it had not been for the noble stand that Devonshire, for instance, made against Tractarian innovation—there is no saying what would have been our present position in the English Church. Nevertheless, let us not glory—let us not be off our guard. I fear that to a large extent this is but one evil spirit casting out another. The evil spirit of Tractarianism is now being cast out largely by the evil spirit of Neology and Pantheism; and for my own part, of the two evil spirits I believe the latter is worse than the former. I would rather have a people steeped in superstition than a people drunk with

intellectual neology and infidelity. The one is but a recoil from the other. Popery first makes the drivelling dupe; and when he discovers that he has been duped, he recoils upon the lie of infidelity. It will be so in Ireland. If we do not christianize Ireland, Popery will infidelize Ireland: if we do not offer to the poor Irishman that is laying hold of the rotten board of the sinking ship of Romanism, the life boat of truth, the written Word of God, he will leap into the gulf of infidelity, and the blood of our brother will be required at our hands.

There is another cheering feature, in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. In the latter I trust indeed that it is no new thing; but in the House of Commons there is more deference and respect exhibited now to the enunciation of sound sentiments, and above all to an appeal to the Word of God, than there was in the last Parliament. We may trace already the wholesome and the happy influence that Protestant electors have had, not only in choosing men of sound principle, as far as they could get them, but in controlling and coercing men of unsound principle, when they could not get better. Electors of England!—I am addressing some hundreds here—it is you that hold largely the destinies of your country in your hand. It is in vain that we speak, it is in vain that you cheer, it is in vain that we combine, that we agitate, that we petition, if you do not tell practically on every election in the country. For after all, our statesmen and our rulers do not ask what is said in fanatical Exeter Hall, but they ask what is said on the hustings, and what is done in the polling booths. There the battle of your Christianity and your country nationally is to be fought; and stand boldly to your posts when the time of trial comes.

And there is another point upon which I am exceedingly anxious to engage the attention of this great Meeting; and I pray that it may go forth through them to the rest of the country. I believe that the next great step on the part of Rome and her motley allies in this country, will be to rend asunder the church and the state. I believe that the rending asunder of church and state would be the death-knell of England's constitution. I believe that if that Union still stands, though considerably impaired and shaken, and there is now almost an impossibility of keeping out the incoming flood of latitudinarianism, infidelity and Romanism, let that barrier be once swept away, and they would overwhelm the land. I would that our Nonconformist brethren were alive to the fact, that their aspirations and efforts are cheered on and delighted in by their enemies and ours, the Romanists. I will give you a fact. I am precluded from giving names, on account of delicacy; but there was a gentleman staying in my house at the time when a beloved friend over whose mis-judgment we may lament, but whose motives we dare not for a moment suspect, and whose character will always commend our love and veneration, however we may regret the errors of his judgment and of his pen:—I had a friend at my house, when he felt it his conscientious duty to protest against the union of church and state, and to abandon the church mainly on account of that union; and a portion of a letter received by that friend from a brother who had become a Romanist was to this effect:—"We exult in the step that has been taken; you may perhaps suppose that our exultation has abated because he has not joined our church; quite the contrary, we rejoice in it the more; because we believe that if he had joined us, the moral effect would have been as nothing compared with the moral effect he will have by not joining us, in driving in the wedge to separate the abominable union of church and state, which must take place before Catholic truth triumphs." That is truth coming out. That is the way in which what the Nonconformists so exult over, anything that will

tend to separate the union between church and state, is regarded by the Romanists; and is it not a very startling fact, that our Nonconformist brethren and their great enemies, as well as ours, should be at one in the desire to pull down the last bulwark that is between us and the Papacy?

My Christian friends, do not be shaken in your attachment to the good old Church of England. Her articles are not changed; her homilies are not changed; her prayer-book is not changed; her orders are not changed. We will not ask Dr. Pusey, or Mr. Newman, or any other doctor, or bishop, or archbishop, what the Church of England teaches or says; there it is, patent to all; the peasant as well as the prelate may read what our church teaches, and I am content to live and die by that teaching. Do not, Christian friends, be shaken because some good men, whose motives you esteem, and whose characters you revere, go on the vain search after a perfect church in an imperfect world. If they themselves are perfect, then let them look for a perfect church: otherwise, if they join a perfect church, they will make it imperfect by joining it. I cannot make a vessel of unmixed gold, if I mingle clay with the gold; and if I myself, at best, whatever grace may make me, am but the clay of nature with the gold of grace, I cannot build up a temple of pure gold, with material still mixed with earth. It was beautifully said, as I have been told, with all the shrewdness and sharpness of his character, by good Bishop Daly, not then a bishop of our church—it was beautifully said by him, when he met John Darby, after he had seceded from the church, “Why, John, you have left us, I hear.” “Yes, Mr. Daly,” was the reply,” I have.” “And pray, may I ask, what church you have joined,” said the bishop? “Why, to tell you the truth,” was the reply,” I have not yet made up my mind; I may say I am my own church?” “Well John,” said the bishop, with his natural shrewdness, “and have you found yours a purer church than the one you have left?” I believe that he was too much of a Christian man to say that his own sinful self and heart was purer than the church which he had left; and I do not see why a man who is himself very imperfect and impure, should find fault with his church, because she is not spotless. At all events, my Christian friends, “look well before you leap.” Take care that you have got a better boat before you abandon the good old man-of-war, which has

“Brav’d the battle and the breeze;”

for be assured, that with all her faults, though there are leaks in her side, and rents in her canvas, and though there are many rats that have come over from Rome and nestled within her hold, yet the old vessel, while she carries her articles, and her prayer-book, and her primitive creed, carries her Saviour also; and though she may be tossed like the little bark on the bosom of the lake of Galilee, and sometimes it may seem as if her Master were sleeping and had forgotten her, and she was well nigh filled with the waters, if we are faithful and lift up our voice to Him in the hour of danger, He will arise now as He arose then, and say, “Peace, be still.”

My Christian friends, stand up for the Union of Church and State. Take a firm, a moderate, a middle course. Be such Protestants as not to forget that you are churchmen, and such churchmen as not to forget that you are Protestants. Thank God that a large body of those who are not within our pale are sound in their views of the importance of a Christian Establishment; and with regard to the Wesleyan body I desire to testify that they stand nobly out from many of their brethren who might profit by their example, and that they have not such a horror of a state church, as to be blind to the tenfold danger of that state church being Romanism. Depend

upon it, an ascendant state church this nation will have. It is but a question between the ascendancy of Rome, and the ascendancy of Canterbury ; it is but a question between our having the reformed religion, or the unreformed religion. And, my Christian friends, is this the time of day when we should begin to take Popery's Jacob deceiving hand, and clasp it in friendship and in fellowship? What! is this the time? Our forefathers braved the Vatican, when its thunders woke the echoes of Europe and shook the world; and are we to crouch, and to fawn, and to tremble before Rome when her poor wretched head himself flies in the disguise of a livery servant? What! can he not govern Italy, and can he govern Ireland? If he cannot keep Rome quiet, are we to go cap in hand to ask him to quiet the poor wretched peasantry of Ireland? "Physician, heal thyself." We do not want the quackery of Rome to remedy the evils of Ireland. I will tell you what we want. We want a band of men brought out of the Church of Rome, like Mr. Foley; we want a band of men with the Bible in their hands, and the Bible on their lips; we want a band of men full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; we want a band of men mighty in prayer and fearless of soul; we want a band of men gushing out with Christian charity, and yet glowing with unmitigable hatred to Popery; we want a band of men acknowledged and authorised by the whole hierarchy of the Church of Ireland, having exemption from the bullet of the assassin, protected under the common law by Her Majesty's executive in Ireland; and further, we want them to be free—free to preach, free to practise. We want this army of godly men to emancipate Ireland; we want them to go with no sword, but the sword of the Spirit—no warfare, but that of love to Jesus, and love to His immortal, redeemed creatures—and hatred to antichrist, as the great enemy of Christ, of Ireland, and of the world. Let us have such men to go forth through the length and breadth of Ireland; and as the Lord liveth, and as His truth cannot fail, Ireland shall be free, Popery shall be driven out, and liberty shall be established.

My Christian friends, we will not go to antichrist, but to Christ; we will not go to bulls and decretals and encyclicals, but to the Word of the living God; we will not go to a pitiful wretched liberalism—to a truckling policy which has degraded and almost ruined us, but we will go to a bold, uncompromising stand-up fight of truth against error, Protestantism against Popery, the Bible against the devil; and there is no doubt as to the result.

My reverend brethren in England, let us follow the noble example set us by our reverend friends across the channel, 400 of whom have signed a solemn engagement—you may call it, if you like, after the Scotch example, a "holy covenant"—that they will no longer act upon a temporising, pitiful policy, but that they will preach to the Romanist as well as to the Protestant, the blessed Gospel, and will have it preached boldly in their own parishes, as well as in India and New Zealand. Have they entered into this noble resolve? Let us follow their example. England wants to have the Reformation carried out, as well as Ireland. We want to re-protestantise England, as they want to unromanise Ireland. Depend upon it, the dark insinuations against Protestantism that go unrebuked in high places; depend upon it that the insidious tone of a large portion of the public press, is due to our cowardice and want of moral integrity. Afraid of Popery? What! shall light be afraid of darkness? Afraid of Popery? Shall truth be afraid of a lie—a stupendous lie—an imposture? My Christian friends, our danger is not from without, but from within. I do not fear Popery—I fear Protestantism. It is our perfidy, our cold-heartedness, our want of moral courage, our want of consistency in our high principles, that gives Popery all her boldness and courage. I can

give you the experience of four-and-twenty years in this matter ; and I can assure you that it all goes to prove that Popery is like the mastiff, bold and brave when you are cowardly, but like the shrinking cur when you are bold and look her in the face. There is nothing which Popery so much fears as the light, and if the light were brought to bear upon her, rely upon it she would never stand before it. My Christian friends, the battle is begun in Ireland. Let me say that I believe there is in expectation a meeting in London, to which Mr. Bickersteth and Mr. Dallas will come and give the Christians of London, and through them, the Christians of England, a most gratifying and cheering account of how God has opened all Ireland to receive the blessed Gospel ; how six or seven of the bishops have offered to ordain and licence men who are to labour as Protestant missionaries in Ireland ; and how, spite of priestly denunciation, and priestly tyranny and wrath, the poor Romanists are flocking to hear the truth ; and there never was for old Ireland so glorious a promise and so bright a hope as are now dawning upon her darkness. I believe that all the quackery of our houses of legislation for the last few years, and all our empirical experiments have been utterly vain and useless, nay, worse than useless, in comparison with this great and glorious purpose. May God speed it ; may His Spirit descend upon it ; may the incorruptible seed, despite all the weeds and the briars that choke the soil in the hearts of Irishmen, find its way deep into that soil, and spring up a glorious harvest of love, and charity, and kindness, and truth, and purity.

My Christian friends, let us not be hindered in this work because we are told that Ireland is ungrateful ; let us not be hindered because we are told of the specimens which Ireland has given to England for all that England has done for her. It is not Ireland, it is Popery—it is not the Celt, it is the Romanist, that makes the dark return. Look at Mr. Foley as a specimen of what a Celt is when he becomes a Protestant. He is but a specimen of a class, and a goodly class it is. I would they were here, ranged along this hall ; they would have no need to hide their faces from you. My Christian friends, is he ungrateful ? is he unintelligent ? is he devoid of any noble sentiment ? He is a Celt, but then he is a Christian Celt, a Protestant Celt, a renovated Celt, and that makes all the difference. If you judge of the one class by the specimens that you have, such as O'Connell and others, judge of the other class by the specimens that you have. Set the one against the other. Do not trace that to Ireland, that should be traced to the shore of the Tiber. Remember that you do a great injustice to Ireland, if you set down her crime, her misery, her degradation, her ingratitude, her restlessness, her discontent, her perpetual beggary and woe, to the people—to the country—to the blood, or to anything or everything but Popery—Popery—Popery ! My Christian friends, I have sometimes felt, as probably most men on this side of the channel, have felt, ‘ Well, Ireland is a hopeless thing ; Ireland is incurable ; the more we try to do for her the less she prospers ; the more we try to do for her the more degraded she is.’ But I have checked myself by remembering that this is a cruel injustice. We are blaming the Protestants for what is due to the Papists, and the Papists for what is due to the Pope. If we could only rid them of Popery, then we might have hope ; but till then they are not Irishmen, they are aliens and strangers ; their heart is with Pius when it should be with Victoria ; they are loyal to a usurper when they should be loyal to our beloved Protestant queen—whom may God bless. For I believe, that whatever her Majesty's ministers may do, whatever trimming and heartless conservatives may have done ; whatever this or that class of men may have done to betray Protestantism, and to continue the slavery of

Ireland, it never was in the heart that beats in the bosom of Victoria. She cannot have forgotten that in that heart flows the life-blood that throbbed once in the veins of noble old George the Third, who said to Lord Eldon, "My Lord, I can brave death, I can bear to go to a cottage and lay aside my throne and my crown, but I dare not violate my coronation oath." I believe, too, that the noble Prince Albert, who demeaned himself with so much wisdom and so much prudence—I believe that he who has the blood of the Lutherans beating in his veins, has not forgotten that it was his being a Protestant that elevated him to the noblest station of any subject in the world; and that if he had been born a son of the Emperor of Austria, or a son of the mightiest Popish potentate of the mightiest empire on which the sun shines, he would never have been allowed to clasp the fair hand, and to unite himself with the destinies of the greatest monarch that sits enthroned on the earth. I cannot bring myself for a moment to believe that if we could get at the real sentiments, and know the real emotions that throb in their hearts, we should not find them responding to our own. We want no Cromwell, we want no Commonwealth, we want no democracy, we want no revolution, we want no freer institutions, we want no further amalgamation of liberty with order and order with liberty than we already possess. My Christian friends, never let Englishmen mistake licentiousness for liberty, anarchy for freedom, the mob for a beautiful harmonious assembly. We do not want to go through the ordeal of the bloody battle-field of France. We do not want to be turned into the seething cauldron of Austria, boiling from its depths. We do not want to try the experiment of half Protestant and half Popish Prussia, which by joining both has come to share, I may say, the evils of both. We have a noble constitution, and we want to go backward to it, not forward from it. We have civil and religious liberty to the full. We are the envy of other nations, and they would fain fashion their own attempts at constitution-making after our own time-honoured model. To be Englishmen, or like Englishmen, is their highest glory and ambition. We open our bosom to shelter the persecuted and the exiled, from the mighty monarch down to the simplest pastor. England is still the refuge of the oppressed, the shelter of the free, the homestead of all that is lovely, glorious, and blessed. God grant that she may never bring herself down from her high elevation by any wretched attempts at tinkering a constitution, or patching up a new government!

My Christian friends, let it go—I would that it might reach her undisguised and unsophisticated—let it go to the ears of our beloved Queen and her honoured spouse, that the Protestants of England, the men of Exeter Hall, the men who are denounced as firebrands and agitators, are the men who would rally round her throne and her dynasty. Would that it could reach her ears that we are not men who wear two faces under a mask; that we are not men who, under the Jesuit's cowl, mask the dark assassin, the incendiary, and the anarchist. We are men who have nothing to hide; we come forth in broad day-light. We say, like as our barons of old did, 'We do not want our laws to be changed.' 'We do not want the church of England to be papistatized; we do not want Ireland to be given up to the dark sway of a dreadful superstition. We want freedom for Ireland, we want freedom for England; but it is freedom to do right, not to do wrong; to uphold, not to destroy; to fear God and honour our Queen, not, under the pretence of fearing God, to dishonour our Queen and drive her as a fugitive from our shores!'

My Christian friends, ere I sit down, I must add, that I look upon the present juncture as a crisis in the history of our country and in the history of our

own individual lives, such a crisis as never occurred during our times, nor perhaps during any times, even since the glorious Reformation. Depend upon it, we shall be utterly at sea if we do not forecast the dark and fearful things that are gathering again over Europe. The first distant muttering of the thunder, the first droppings of the thunder-cloud, the first shock of the electric flash is suspended; but the cloud is becoming darker and heavier, and is canopying Europe with its dread freightage of woe and of desolation. Whether we turn to the right hand or to the left, behind or before, east or west, north or south, on all hands is heard the tramp of the steed, the clang of the trumpet, the whetting of the sword for battle. God has gone forth to pour out His vials upon the nations. All Christendom well-nigh, except our own favoured island, is reeling and tottering. There is not a stable throne, except the Protestant thrones, over all Christendom. The question comes upon us with a thrilling and throbbing emotion, "Is England still to be safe? Is she still to remain unscathed? Is the lightning that desolates other lands to be carried innocuous to the waters that girdle her shores? Is she still to stand forth, the ambassadress of Heaven and the benefactress of earth? Are all nations still to turn their eyes to her as the home of liberty and peace? Are the exiles of every country still to find a shadow and a resting-place in her quiet breast?" The startling question may be answered by another—Will England be faithful to her principles, true to her privileges, loyal to her Saviour, uncompromising in her adherence to the Bible? Everything depends upon that. And one lesson which the fearful commotions and the marvellous electric shocks of the past year have taught us is this—God is more and more taking events out of the hands of instrumentalities, and making it apparent to us that it is His own mighty arm that is stretched out. How else can we account for the fact, that sentiments with which it used to take a century to leaven a people, now seem to run like the electric telegraph from heart to heart, from shore to shore? How is it that we see men acting they scarcely know why, rushing they scarcely know whither, all moving up and down? Is it not the mighty spirit of the power of the air gathering the hosts for the battle, mustering them by an unseen and irresistible movement in their souls? May the good and blessed Spirit gather the hosts of the faithful, move their hearts, bring them together by the magnetic power of a common love, and a common faith, and a common truth; so that if, on the one hand, we see the foreshadowings of a mighty confederation and combination for evil, on the other hand, we may see a still more mighty confederation and combination for good—more mighty, though smaller in number, though ungirt with the sword, and undefended by the sword; more mighty, though the great, and the noble, and the monarchs of the earth may despise it, because the Lord of hosts is with it, and the Captain of our salvation holds the world in His fist.

The times call, therefore, for redoubled simplicity of faith, redoubled fervour of intercession, redoubled boldness of Christian fortitude, redoubled trust only in the one foundation that cannot be shaken. If Christian people bestir themselves whilst they may; if Neology and Liberalism and Popery and every form of error meet with no quarter from us; if from the cottage up to the senate house we make the truth as it is in Jesus our rallying cry, our watch-word, and our standard, then, my Christian friends, we may have hope for old England, that though God may utterly destroy other nations He will not destroy her, but when the destroying angel comes over her, as he did over Jerusalem of old, with his flaming sword unsheathed, a gracious God, in answer to our prayers, as in answer to those of David of old, will say, "Put up thy sword, for it is enough."

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M.A.

PREACHED IN REGENT'S SQUARE CHURCH, GRAY'S INN ROAD,

ON FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Church of England Young Men's Society, for Aiding Missions at Home and Abroad.

"Ye are not your own."—1 Corinthians vi. 19.

"**WE** are our own, and who is lord over us?" is the language, if not of the lip, at least of the life, of the largest number of those who bear the Christian name. Self-dependance, self-seeking, self-pleasing, self-glorying, characterize their whole conduct. God is seldom in their thoughts, and never in their hearts. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know. My people doth not consider."

Our own we cannot be; and those that think themselves the most free are the greatest slaves. They serve many masters—hard masters, base masters; and whilst they promise others freedom, they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For "he that doeth sin is the servant of sin." God has made us to be dependant; and if we will not depend upon Him, we shall become in bondage to the very things that ought to serve us—"the world, the flesh, and the devil."

This independence of God is the root of all our apostacy; it is the essence of crime and the principle of disobedience; and till the paramount claims of God are acknowledged—acknowledged not only with the assent of the understanding, but with the submission of the heart, there can be no religion that deserves the name. To "yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness"—this is the turning point of our individual salvation. In proportion as this great principle of our being, wholly, absolutely, unalterably God's, is established in our consciences and reigns perpetually in our hearts, we shall "glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are His." We shall live no longer "to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again;" we shall rejoice to set forth the glory of God, by setting forward the salvation of others; our whole lives will become "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men."

And therefore, my dear youthful brethren, to whom I more especially address myself on this occasion, I have selected this brief but most pregnant expression, as best fitted, if the Spirit of God accompany it with His power, to "stir up your minds by way of remembrance" to fresh devotedness to God your Saviour and fresh zeal in His service, and for the salvation of mankind. Let us look up to God to be present with us, that we may not speak, and that ye may not hear in vain. To establish this simple position, admitted by most, but realised by few, and adequately realised by none, will be our object. A few arguments, plain as they are incontrovertible, and constraining, if our hearts be not utterly debased, will occupy our attention.

"Ye are not your own;" for ye are not self-created. If man had made himself, man might rule himself; if he were self-formed, he might serve self; but reason itself bears witness, that the thing created is most clearly and indefea-

sibly the property of him that created it; even as the potter that forms the lump of clay into the vessel that pleases him, has that vessel for his own. All that the creature is, all that the creature hath, it owes to the good-will and pleasure of Him that called it into existence. Can we look at these bodies of ours, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," so complicated, yet so exquisite, so varied in part, and yet so harmonious in whole—can we examine them, and not feel a great and awful conviction, that "He made us, and not we ourselves," that "we are His workmanship," that He "formed us secretly in the lower parts of the earth, and our members were fashioned by Him day by day," (written in His pattern-book,) "when as yet there was no form in them?" "Such knowledge is too marvellous for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it." And if from the tenements so beautifully and exquisitely wrought, we look into the spirits that inhabit them, and examine the mysterious properties and powers of our minds and our hearts—examine reason, conscience, imagination, memory, love, fear, joy, hope—we are lost in far deeper amazement. "Oh! what a mystery to man is man!" What a world there is within us! What marvellous capacities, however shattered! What astonishing powers, however enfeebled! What amazing desires, however degraded! Can any man dream that that soul was the offspring of accident or chance? Can any man dream that a creature gave it birth—that any but the infinite God by His own inspiration could impart it? If God, then, thus formed our bodies from the dust, and thus gave our spirits by the breath of His own life, can we be our own? "If I be a Father," says God, "where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is My fear?"

But He made us for Himself, even as He made us by His power. Not only were "all things created by Him, but for Him." "For Thy pleasure," it is said in the Book of Revelation, "they are and were created." And if all lower things were created for God's pleasure, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and "the cattle on a thousand hills" were made by God, for His own purpose and glory, can we imagine that man, His master-work below, that He made to be a kind of representative of Himself in this lower province of His dominions, that He set as the intelligent high-priest in the temple that He had so beautified and adorned, that he might "look through nature up to nature's God," and render to Him the intelligent homage and adoration of a soul and a heart formed for God's adoration and for God's glory,—can we imagine that man was not made for the same end? "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork;" "angels, that excel in strength, hearken to His voice and do His commandments." All things, in heaven and earth and under the earth, do obey Him, saving devils and men; they alone rob their Creator of His due—the tribute that belongs to Him of inalienable right, the tie that binds the thing created to its Creator. Surely no man can study the beautiful proportions and structure of the body, much more the marvellous capacities and capabilities of the soul, and imagine that he was made to live the life of a brute—that his "belly" should be "his god," as the Scripture expresses it, or that self in some form or other should be his god, or that he should consecrate all his energies of mind and efforts of body to heap up shining dust, or that he should squander all his powers in the paltry pursuit of perishing pleasure, or that he should spend all his mighty energies in the pursuit of the phantom of fame, or the withering gourd of human applause. Brethren, "ye are not your own," for ye might not have created yourselves. Nor were ye created for yourselves: God created you, and He made you for Himself.

But neither are you your own, for you are not self-sustained. If God had made the life which He imparted independant of Himself—if we could spin out the thread of life at pleasure—if we could cut it short or prolong it, as we could if we owed to God no daily and constant dependance upon Him—we might say, 'I do as I please, I live as I will, and I can act as I choose, for I am inde-

pendent of all beings; I am therefore as a god to myself.' But however vain man may set himself up in proud self-sufficiency, he lives a lie while he lives forgetful of his daily and constant and only dependence on God. There is no such thing as independant being, save in the Source of all being; God only "hath life in Himself;" and it is the peculiar feature that characterises Christ especially as one with the Father, that He "hath life in Himself, and whom He will He quickeneth." But of no other being but the Source of all being can it ever be predicated, that he "hath life in Himself." Jehovah, "I am that I am," self-existent, uncaused, and therefore infinitely independent! Of all other beings, from the loftiest archangel down to the smallest emmet that crawls the dust, it is true, "in Him they live and move and have their being." So that we cannot move a limb, we cannot draw a breath, we cannot beat a pulse, we cannot continue in life for one moment, but as He holdeth our souls in life. There is a secret unseen Hand that holds us fast, wherever we go or whatsoever we do; and it is a fearful thought, that when men use their minds and their members in the service of Satan, and give themselves up to "work all uncleanness with greediness," they are using the very life that God's power and God's longsuffering lengthen out for them, in proud and daring rebellion against Him: as if the hand were to raise itself against the head, or the foot were to lift itself up against the heart.

Yea, brethren, and it is not only our animal and natural life that we owe to a constant sustentation from God; but we owe also the life of our minds. He has but to withdraw for a moment His supporting hand, and the mind falls into ruins; and the fearful wretched wreck that you find in a lunatic asylum would be instantly yours, if God left the mechanism of the mind to go into disorder and into collision. If any man doubt whether he can live independently of God, let him try to lengthen his life, when sickness has brought him low and when the cold hand of death makes him tremble. How will men then toss on their beds and long to live! "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;" but not a moment can they add to their life-time. They talk of the necessity of dying and of the debt of nature; but they talk vainly,—it is the fiat of God, He "killeth and maketh alive," He "spaketh and we are created," He "withholdeth our breath and we die and return to our dust." "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." If, therefore, creation binds us to God, preservation is continually enhancing the tie, and strengthening it every hour.

But, brethren, there is a higher and a holier tie still that binds us to God. It is the tie of all others on which the glorious Gospel delights to dwell. The apostle was arguing with the Corinthians that they should not defile their bodies with impurity and lasciviousness and uncleanness; and the argument he uses is—"What! know ye not that ye are bought with a price, and ye are not your own?" This is the power of the appeal that is before us; and therefore more largely and more specially we hasten to prove to you, that you are not your own, for you are not self-redeemed. If creation and preservation have, or ought to have, a constraining power upon every conscience and heart, how much more ought redemption to constrain? If we were redeemed from ever so little, still the claim would be binding. But there is every consideration in the redemption that is by Christ Jesus to overwhelm our judgments and to overpower our hearts; and were not our judgments most blinded and perverted, and our natural hearts hard as the adamant, the simple setting forth of the love of God in Christ would convince every judgment and convert every heart. We are well aware that no reason or persuasion can accomplish this; yet the Spirit of God works by reasonable means. May He accompany with His power to all your hearts, dear younger brethren, this appeal; and may you remember the voice that says to you—"My son, give Me thine heart!"

From what have we been redeemed? From guilt, from peril, from death eternal. From guilt. There would have been no need of a Mediator, if there

had been no transgression, and if no transgression no guilt. But "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one." "God made us upright, but we have sought out many inventions." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." "The heart" of each one "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And what is the consequence? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." All are condemned; for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And therefore "by the deeds of the law," or works of the flesh, "can no man living be justified." Hopeless condemnation, and irremediable despair were the lot of every child of man, but for the Redeemer. And from what peril were we redeemed? The danger of the wrath of God, which is "death;" the curse of His law, more fearful than the thunders of the last day; perpetual exposure to eternal ruin—only "the breath in the nostrils" between us and the worm that never dies. Yea, and from what eternal ruin were we redeemed? Not only from spiritual death, the death of the soul, but from eternal death, that spiritual death protracted for ever. "Who" among us "shall dwell with the devouring flame? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Have you pondered, brethren, the worm that never dies and the fire that is never quenched? Have you dwelt on "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever?" From what a depth of damnation, then, were we rescued and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ! It was an eternal damnation. Eternity! Eternity! How it ought to make every heart thrill and every spirit tremble in the prospect of it! Who can conceive of it aright? None but God can comprehend it.

Brethren, and to what were we redeemed? We were not only redeemed from condemnation, and guilt, and pollution, and the wrath of God, and banishment from His presence, and estrangement from all communion with Him; but the blessed Jesus gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to bring us back to God—to bring us not merely back to Paradise, but into most intimate union and relationship with the everlasting Father, nearer than before man fell—to make our souls the very habitation of His Spirit. Brethren, would God that we contemplated and realised this eternal love, till our hearts were overwhelmed with the debt that we owe to Him who has called us and chosen us and ransomed us, that He might make us "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

But still, brethren, the half has not been told. Remember with what a price ye were redeemed. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." It was not the mightiest angel that came to rescue you from ruin; there was One only that could rescue you, and He was God's own Fellow, Jehovah's co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent Son. And "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;" and that blessed Son "abhorred not the Virgin's womb," but took the manhood into God, that in the nature that had transgressed He might expiate the transgression, "by offering up Himself, by one offering for ever to perfect all them that are sanctified." So that "by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, and by His glorious resurrection and ascension," we ought to be constrained to yield ourselves to Him. Go to Gethsemane, and behold the bloody sweat; go to Calvary, and witness the dread anguish of the expiring Emmanuel, when His cry was, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—and learn what it cost to redeem you. Will you rob Christ of the purchase of His blood? Oh! what sacrilege, to take from Him what He purchased with the travail of His own soul!

But, brethren, there is one thought more, to enhance the wondrous worth of

the ransom. It was all of grace—of simple, sovereign, eternal grace. Had God been bound to redeem us—had there been necessity on Him, for the sake of His own equity, to redeem us—even this would not have absolved us from the obligations of the covenant; we should have been equally bound, however small the price, in one point of view, and however that price was due from justice; but it enhances the apprehension of the wondrous act of redemption a thousand-fold, when we remember that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”—that “by grace we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.” All flowed forth from the fathomless mercy of God Almighty. Ask as you will, trace as you may the fountain-head of redemption, you will find it nowhere but in this—“He had mercy because He would have mercy:” all of mere pity, mere love to a ruined and a wretched and a loathsome race, that had everything to repulse His love and nothing to attract it, but as misery could move mercy. And yet, brethren, He “loved us with an everlasting love,” and in the purpose of His grace He gave His Son to be slain “from the foundation of the world.” Who can comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that “passeth knowledge?”

And, brethren, there is one thought more that should yet constrain the lingering and the doubting and the halting to give themselves up to God. “Ye are not your own, for ye are” witnesses against yourselves that “ye are bought with a price,” and that ye are called by the name of your Redeemer. What means that Christian name, by which each one of us is styled? what meant that holy water, poured upon our brow? what meant that baptism “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” the Triune God of our salvation? what meant that sign of the cross, traced upon our infant forehead?—except that “as many as are baptized into Christ should put on Christ?” If the heathen world, when appealed to, are bound to acknowledge the appeal and submit to the challenge, because they were created and are preserved by God—how much more we Christians in profession and in name, who have avouched the Lord to be our God! Men say, ‘We make no profession of religion,’ and they taunt those that are more righteous than themselves by saying that they are professors, and justify their own neglect and ungodliness by flippantly saying, ‘We make no profession.’ What, then, do *you* make? Do you profess to be apostates, infidels, atheists? Do you profess to have cast off Christ’s yoke, and trampled Christ’s covenant under foot? Do you mean to say that you blush for the cross that was traced on your brow, and that you make light of the water of baptism that sealed you to be Christ’s? Ah! brethren, there is not one of you that is not bound, himself being the judge, to yield himself up to God his Saviour, and “to glorify Him in his body and his spirit, which are His.” And be assured of this,—the poor godless heathen will rise up in judgment against us to condemn us, and will indeed be swift witnesses against our souls, if we that in name and profession and pledge and covenant and obligation are bound to the Lord, yet rob Him of His own, and “will not have Him to reign over us.”

But, my dear youthful brethren, “we are persuaded better things of” most of “you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” Bear with us, then, if we plead with any of you that are as yet living as though you were your own. We plead with you the cause of God. “Come now, and let us reason together.” Why is it that you withhold from God His own? Why is it that you shut Him out from that heart that He longs to possess? He hath stood and knocked against the door of it year after year; and why do you not give Him admission? Does He come to curse? Does He come to torment? Does He come to degrade? Does He come to enslave? No, He comes to justify, to purify, to elevate, to ennoble, to glorify. My dear younger brethren, there is nothing so beautiful as to give the heart to Jesus from the first; not to put off the Saviour till we have tasted the syren

cup of the world, and till we have gathered the poisoned flower that looks so fair but tastes so bitter, but to take Christ at His word and trust Him that there is none worth serving but Himself, and that all are usurpers but our rightful King and Lord: to do this ingenuously, cheerfully, freely, from the beginning—this is beautiful indeed. “The flower offered in the bud,” the young lamb, the firstling of the flock, laid upon His altar! For a man to be driven to God after he has run the whole length of earthly pleasure and folly—to come to God as a last alternative, because he dare not stand out against Him any longer—this is indeed but a pitiful return; but to be “drawn with cords of love and with bands of a man”—to have the kindness of the espousals of our youth to look back upon with gratitude and delight—to give ourselves to God more through the constraining power of love than the terror and dread of destruction—this is beautiful.

My dear young friends, are there any of you that startle at the demand that is made upon you, and that would draw back and say, ‘Surely, this is more than should be demanded of us; surely, this entire devotedness to God would interfere with the ordinary business of life, and it is impracticable and impossible thus to give ourselves wholly to God?’ Beware of the suggestion; it comes not from above, but from beneath; it is Satan himself that puts that vain and rebellious thought into your minds. Inconsistent with ordinary business to serve God? “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to His glory.” Alas! that men should so let self usurp the throne of their hearts, that when the rightful monarch comes to claim his own, they are roused to indignation at the thought of dethroning the usurper and placing the Saviour on His throne. Dear younger brethren, be assured of this—the man that serves God best will serve his generation best, and the man that does whatever he does in word or deed “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” will be the faithfullest to his earthly master, the most exemplary in his worldly calling, the most trustworthy in all the relationships of life—the man that will most prosper in this life, if prosperity be for his good, as he will be best prepared for the life that is to come.

Beloved brethren, and even in the regenerate what a sad lingering sentiment there is of independence, even when we come to confess, “O Lord our Lord, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us, but henceforth will we make mention only of Thy name;” even after there has been a solemn surrender of our souls and our bodies to be a reasonable and holy and lively sacrifice to God in Christ—even after we have been to the holy table of communion, and acknowledged ourselves to be “bought with the price” of that blood that we have spiritually drunk,—what resistance there is oftentimes in the battlefield of our breast against the claims of God! how often we consult with flesh and blood! We confer with the world, we think of sordid interest, we have many struggles with ourselves, when we ought to have but one sentiment—“I am not my own:” “Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?” “Speak, for Thy servant heareth;” “where Thou biddest me go I will go, what Thou biddest me do I will do, what Thou biddest Me shun I will avoid, what Thou biddest me sacrifice I will surrender, what Thou commandest me to undergo I will suffer.” Instead of this, what debates, what entreaty and persuasion are often needed, to constrain us to think ourselves not our own! Brethren, we are sometimes led to think that the desperate corruption of human nature shows itself more convincingly in the holiest saint than it does in the vilest sinner, for in the sinner you expect rebellion and lawlessness—but for the child of God, in whom “grace has abounded” and with whom “to will is present,” that he should still “have a law in his members warring against the law of his mind,” and that sometimes he should be so oppressed by it as to be constrained to cry out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—it is a fearful demonstration of the deadliness of the malady that we bring into the world, and which even in the regenerate

still exists, and but for sovereign grace would break out afresh, and poison all "the issues of life."

Beloved brethren, and what a glorious thing it is to live as not our own! In the catechism of the sister church in Scotland we have this momentous question—"What is the chief end of man?" And the answer is—"To glorify God, and enjoy Him for ever." Oh! the sublimity of such a purpose! Oh! the pitiful meanness of any lower purpose in one made for such destiny and such dignity! This gives reality, solidity, grandeur to our existence. To follow anything lower as the master-aim, is to judge ourselves unworthy of our destiny, and is to sell the soul that God made for Himself. But oh! what reality it gives to the humblest life, when it is spent for God's glory! No matter whether it be as a lowly servant, like the little captive maid of Israel in Assyria; no matter whether it be as the simple, faithful, and punctual clerk in the office, or as the senator in the House of Assembly, or the prime minister at the helm of state; if each one does his duty in the state of life to which it has pleased God to call him, from God and for God and to God in Christ, oh! then he is dignified—he is ennobled. It is not the lot, but the way in which the lot is fulfilled, that constitutes true excellence. Many that the world admires and applauds, God abhors; many that the world pities and condemns, God highly esteems. Beautifully, though quaintly, has it been said by one of our old divines—"If two angels descended from heaven, to fulfil their Father's will, and the one were appoint to scavenge the streets, and the other to rule a mighty empire, the one would be as contented and delighted and happy in his lot as the other, because alike happy in the will and the purpose and the favour of their God." That was a sentiment of truth, as it was a sentiment of moral grandeur; and it is, after all, the doing all for God that constitutes the true greatness in our lot. The distinctions that are beside this and without this will soon pass away, for they belong but to the scenery and the scaffolding of a shifting and a perishing condition of things; but the distinctions that lie in doing or not doing the will of God, in living or not living as our own—these are the distinctions that will survive the wreck of all things temporal, and stand out in their infinite perfection to all eternity.

Beloved brethren, and in glorifying God we must do good to others. "Ye are My witnesses," saith the Lord. God hath put His grace into vessels of clay, "that the excellency of the power" may be the more clearly His own; and though, my younger brethren, in the lowlier lot which some of you may have to fill you may not be as the sun that is "the light of the world," nor as the city that is "set upon a hill," yet you must be as the candle that is lighted and put upon a candlestick—not concealed under a bed or a bushel, but "giving light to them that are in the house." "Let your light so shine before men," whether it be in the counting-house or in the place of high assembly, before the few or before the many—whether it be in the quiet vale of life, or whether it be on the stormy mountain of more public character—still, "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" and you will not have lived in vain, nor laboured in vain, and peace and contentment will follow you. We are never miserable and wicked, but when we act as our own; we are never happy and holy, but when we act as God's. Doing the one, we shall have peace—doing the other, we shall have bitter disappointment; the effort will be with shame and the end everlasting death.

And therefore, my younger brethren, I thank God on your behalf, that He hath led you, by His truth and Spirit (as we believe) to combine together mutually to encourage and animate each other in living as not your own, mutually to be fellow-helpers and fellow-workers in setting forward the kingdom of Christ and seeking to make the light of His Gospel shine into the dark places of our own country, and cast their bright beams on the darkness of heathen lands. We rejoice that you have done this in connection with the church

of your land ; for whilst we say, " Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," our hearts are full of special love to our national Zion. However some may be shaken in their attachment to her, and others wish to transform her into the miserable caricature of a Christian church that usurped her place in the dark ages of our land—however some may be led even to abandon her altogether, we would say, beloved brethren, of her, as we say of our native land—" With all her faults," however many they may be in circumstantial and smaller things—" with all her faults we love her still." We love her, for the truth that is in her ; we love her, for her primitive order ; we love her, for her matchless devotions ; we love her, for the blessing and grace which God hath given her ; we love her, for her " noble army of martyrs ;" we love her, because we believe she is a great buttress and bulwark of Protestant principle and truth in the midst of the world ; we love her, because we believe God is honouring her abroad as His ambassadress, and at home as a blessing to His people. Therefore, my dear young friends, rally around her ; sustain and uphold her ; be not ashamed to stand for her in the evil day ; and whilst you do all your doings with charity, and whilst you have all forbearance and love towards those who differ from you, and whilst you offer the hand of brotherly kindness to those who feel ill-will towards her, if you have reason to think that their ill-will arises from blindness and prejudice, and not from hostility to the truth, yet still continue your quiet and patient labours within her pale. There is scope enough within her for all due liberty of Christian conscience and Christian action, and there are advantages and means and instrumentalities enjoyed within her, that we hesitate not to say are second to none enjoyed in any portion of " Christ's church militant here on earth."

Dear younger brethren, we rejoice and congratulate you for the grace that God hath given to your Association ; that already there are those in the Missionary College that have been among your members, and that are now training for the noble field of evangelisation in heathen lands ; that there are some in our Universities of learning, seeking to be advanced, we trust, not only in " the wisdom that man teacheth, but in that which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," that they may become ambassadors of Christ to win men to God. Go on and prosper. May He guide you with wisdom ! May He give you to be sober-minded, sound-minded, pure and steadfast in the faith, " adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things ;" that your body, now composed of more than two thousand of the youth of our nation, may stand out as ensamples of believers—that men may " take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus," and that masters in their shops and in their countinghouses may be constrained, if they do not understand your principles, to appreciate your practice, and that they may be led to " glorify God in the day of visitation," through the influence of your godly and blameless examples.

And oh ! that you, my brethren, who are in the meridian or evening of life, may have sympathy and fellowship with these our dear younger fellow-pilgrims and fellow-soldiers ! We shall ere very long be leaving our posts and quitting our field of duty ; but these shall stand up in our place. God be thanked, that there is not wanting a generation to " rise up and praise Him," when our lips are silent, and to serve Him when our hands are mouldering in the dust ! May He add to its number. May the sons of our church be " as plants grown up in their youth," and our daughters " as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace." Finally, therefore, brethren, in what we give on this occasion, in what we do for God now and at all times and in all places, let us do it on this great principle—" We are not our own, for we are bought with a price, and should therefore glorify God in our bodies, and our spirits, which are His."

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. ROBERT BICKERSTETH, M.A.

PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, CLAPHAM RISE,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 29, 1849.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him."—1 John v. 1.

WE have two distinct and specific declarations to deal with in handling these words. In the first clause of the text a definition is laid down for determining the question, whether or not a man has been "born of God." The criterion of this new birth, is represented to be faith—and that exercise of faith, which has respect to the messiahship of Jesus—"whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." The language is plain and explicit. The new birth, according to this apostolic definition, is to be determined by the possession of faith upon Jesus, as the Christ. Wheresoever this faith is in operation, the evidence is decisive, that its subject has been "born of God;" while on the other hand, the inference is just as undeniably clear, that where faith upon Jesus as the Christ does not exist, spiritual regeneration has not been effected. This first statement of the apostle, may be said to refer to the "condition" of a believer—in other words, to the privileged state into which through grace he has been brought. If a believer in Jesus, as the Christ, the man has been "born of God;"—he has been made, that is, a child of God by adoption;—he is entitled to appeal upward to God, by the endearing title of "Abba Father."

The second statement of the apostle refers to Christian character; the character in itself being so defined, as to present a test of the condition before referred to. The definition of Christian character, which the inspired apostle gives, is simply this—"Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." The existence of spiritual regeneration will be necessarily accompanied by love to the author of the amazing transformation. But how is the existence of this love to be ascertained? Why the apostle tells you—"Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." This definition, like the former, is plain and comprehensive. It is expressed in general terms—and it obviously amounts to this—that the presence in the heart of love to God, may be invariably determined by the presence, or otherwise, of love to those who have been made fellow-partakers of the privilege of adoption. We have thus endeavoured in the simplest manner to open up the drift of the statements which have to be reviewed. It will be my object in what follows to examine into those statements, believing them to be full of instructive and most important truth. We have already intimated the respective branches into which the subject will obviously divide itself. On the one hand, there is to be considered, the apostle's definition of a believer's condition—and on the other, his definition of the believer's character. To these points in order we shall invite your attention, examining to begin with, the condition of a believer as expressed in the clause—"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" and then passing onwards to consider, secondly, that test of Christian character, which is supplied by the affirmation—"Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him."

and not only "*soberly*," but also "*godly*" in the midst of this present evil world.

Such, men and brethren, is the faith to which allusion is made in the definition before us. You will at once see how this interpretation of faith serves to reconcile the various definitions which are given, by which to ascertain the fact of spiritual regeneration. The faith we have described is one and the same thing with victory over sin and over the world. He who has it cannot live in the wilful, or habitual commission of sin; he who has it must overcome the world. And thus it is when faith is productive of such effects as these—when it launches its possessor forth upon a course of persevering obedience, in pursuit of promises ratified to him by the blood of a Saviour who died in his behalf, that the principle is clearly in operation to which St. John referred when declaring, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."

Now, thus far, we have dealt with the nature of that principle, the being possessed whereof is equivalent, in the apostle's judgment, to the being "born of God." We have shown you it is faith—not in the ordinary acceptance of the term, signifying no more than a mere intellectual assent—but faith, in the sense of an actuating principle, which emanates from God, accepts the testimony of God respecting His Son, and on the strength of that testimony applies sedulously to the discharge of every duty devolving upon the subject of such wondrous mercy, and the heir of such unfading glory. It is necessary, however, that we pass on to the second term in this first clause of the text, namely, "born of God." You know that the expression "born of God," is equivalent to the expression "regeneration," or the new birth; and it is used to intimate that complete change of heart and disposition which must be undergone by every candidate for future salvation. It is set in contrast with what is termed "natural birth," inasmuch as we are by nature born in sin and the children of wrath. And spiritual regeneration is nothing less than the being translated out of this state of guilt, and exposure to God's anger, into a state of pardon and acceptance, through the blood of His Son. It implies, that whereas our natural heritage was that of sin and woe, the heritage we receive in the new birth is that of pardon and blessing. He who by natural birth stood before God with the burden of original sin weighing heavily upon him—certain, moreover, in consequence of the depraved nature he inherits, to contract an additional burden of actual transgression—he, I say, in virtue of his being "born again," is delivered from fear of condemnation, and has new and holier principles imparted to him, by which he is enabled, through grace, to subdue his native corruption, and gradually to acquire those heavenly dispositions which are the indispensable pre-requisite to an entrance into the kingdom of God.

The question, then, which naturally arises at this part of our subject is plainly this—Who is the agent? What is the instrumentality in the accomplishment of this surprising transformation? Now it is almost impossible to speak upon this topic, without allusion to points upon which much of sore and lamentable controversy has divided, and continues to divide, the church of Christ. I wish to have it clearly understood that I do not stand here to contend for any tenet whatsoever but what I find plainly written in God's Word. I have yet to learn upon what possible ground of equity or of religion a clergyman of the Established Church is to have his opinions so shackled by any human authority whatsoever, that he may not unflinchingly proclaim what he believes to be in accordance, and what not in accordance, with God's holy Word. I grant you there would be a flagrant inconsistency and want of common honesty in the attempt to use any influence which position in the Church may give to propagate tenets which that Church repudiates. No one can possibly be justified in becoming a minister of any church whatsoever, unless first thoroughly satisfied in his own mind of the scriptural character of the doctrines which that church holds, and requires her members to hold also. And I maintain, further, that were it to happen that an ordained minister of any church whatsoever should discover what he conscientiously believes to be anti-scriptural doctrine in the formularies or creeds of that church, his plain duty, as an honest man, would be to forego position, fortune, and everything else, sooner than continue to officiate at the altars of a church which he believes to be in error. But I do not maintain it to be the duty of a minister, when a fraction only of the members of a particular church choose to put an interpretation upon her formularies which he never conceived to be the true one, which the large majority of the church repudiate, as unsanctioned by Scripture and opposed to the mind of the framers of those services—I do not conceive it to be the duty of a minister, under such circumstances, to retreat

room for others to step in and avow doctrines equally opposed to the teaching of God's Word and the teaching of the Church herself, if fairly interpreted. I should be equally ashamed to defend a doctrine simply on the ground that it is held by the Church, as to disavow allegiance to the Established Church because a minority would make it seem that her services countenance what I believe to be downright error.

To come at once, then, to the question before us, as to the agent and the instrument in the production of the supernatural change of regeneration, our first business, is to ascertain what is the testimony of God's Word. It is an after question, how far the language of the church is in agreement with that Word. Now the language of Scripture is sufficiently plain in the matter—I will take the three statements, which occur in the course of the chapter before us, which you have heard read during this evening's service. We have had occasion to quote them already; but they may well be repeated. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; "whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world;" "we know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not." Can you prove that any agent in the production of this new birth is spoken of, but God? or that any instrumentality whatever is spoken of, but faith? or can it be questioned that the sacred writer here gives the broad, unqualified declaration, that the being born of God, will be evidenced by victory over the world, and the renunciation of all sin? Does it not plainly follow, that where faith is not in exercise, and where these effects, namely, victory over sin and the world, are not evidenced, the person has not been born of God: in other words, he is not spiritually regenerate? If I am addressing any amongst you, whose minds have been distracted upon the point under consideration, let me entreat of you for once to shake off the trammels of human opinion, and come to the Word of God. I have examined what has to be said on the other side of the question, and the result to which I have arrived is this—that the grand aim of those who would identify baptism with spiritual regeneration, is to adduce testimonies from fathers and councils in support of their view. I would have you remember, the plain testimony of one verse of inspiration, is worth a dozen folios, written by uninspired men, or fifty decretals of councils, that erected human opinion, or human tradition to a level with the Word of God. Churches, be it remembered, have erred, and may err again. Human opinions are fluctuating and fallible; God's Word is the alone safe standard of immutable truth. And I will ask of you to weigh the depth and meaning of these sentences, and then say, if it is possible, with any adherence to the testimony of God's Word, to assert that any man can have been born of God, who does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the sense in which I have expounded faith; who does not overcome the world; and who does not renounce all wilful transgression. And then, with the evidence daily presented before you of baptized persons—persons who have received the rite of baptism with every circumstance that human precaution could ensure to give efficacy to the administration of the rite—with the evidence daily presented before you of such persons, so baptized, living in worldliness, guilt, and unbelief, can you rationally be induced to believe in such a figment as this, that in every instance where baptism is even duly administered, there is the production of that spiritual regeneration, to which the apostle refers, when declaring, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God?"

It is perhaps scarcely fair to quit this portion of the subject, without a cursory notice of one or two passages out of God's Word, upon which the maintainers of baptismal regeneration are fond of relying. The one is that well-known discourse of our blessed Lord with Nicodemus upon the question of the new birth. In the course of the dialogue, which then passed, that very remarkable declaration of Christ occurs—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To this declaration the upholders of baptismal regeneration constantly recur, as decisively in favour of their view. But does it appear, that the phrase, "born of water," applies to baptism at all? If it does, let us examine, what is the doctrine which the passage asserts—"Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be baptized and born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" According to this interpretation, there is no salvation possible without baptism. Even a child, whose baptism has been neglected, or who has died before the ordinance could be administered, cannot be saved. The words of Christ are very explicit. The declaration is solemnly introduced—"Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," that is, he cannot be saved. Surely the most rigid supporters of the view of baptismal regeneration must shrink from a conclusion so awful, so repugnant to the grace of the Gospel, so at variance with the

analogy of Scripture—and yet a conclusion which, as Cranmer himself allowed, must follow, if this text is to be supposed to refer to baptism.

And now, bear in mind that the sacrament of baptism had not been instituted at the time these words were spoken. Divest your mind of baptism, as referred to at all in this passage, and then, how easy and consistent does the interpretation become. The being born of water, signifies the being born of the Spirit. The former is a metaphorical expression denoting the latter. The Spirit's operations are often thus represented by allusion to water, for example: "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed;" again, "he that believeth on Me," said Christ, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living water*, but this," adds the evangelist, "spake He of the *spirit* which they that believe on Him should receive." Thus you see, the gift of the Spirit is metaphorically described by allusion to the cleansing efficacy of water; and the passage before us, falls in with that usual representation—"Except a man be born of water, *even* of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

A similar mode of interpretation fully explains the apparent difficulty, connected with another passage in Titus, where it is said, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." In the first place, it is not clear that the apostle in that passage refers to baptism at all. The connection of the words abundantly proves that he did not refer to the baptism of infants; for he is speaking of those who had grown up to manhood, and "lived in divers lusts and pleasures." "We ourselves also," he says, "were sometimes foolish and disobedient, but according to His mercy He saved us"—"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration"—that is, by the cleansing efficacy of a new birth, *even* "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is not clear then, that this latter passage has anything whatever to do with baptism. Baptism is a work of righteousness in itself. But the apostle is guarding against the notion, that we are saved by any work of righteousness, and he attributes our salvation to the free mercy of God alone; while, if the interpretation he persisted in, that the washing of regeneration does refer to baptism, the interpretation, which St. Paul adds, namely, "even the renewing of the Holy Ghost," is sufficient to refute the assumption, that regeneration itself is attributable to anything else, but the work of the Spirit.

We go on to observe, that in thus repudiating the doctrine that spiritual regeneration is the necessary accompaniment of the rite of baptism, I believe that not only are we speaking in conformity with Scripture, but also in conformity with the language of the church itself. We do not believe the church does teach that all baptized persons are spiritually regenerate. We believe the effort to make it appear that she does so teach, springs from two causes—on the one hand, a desire to enshroud with a mystic character, which is so pleasing to many minds, the sacraments, and so to give a vast degree of importance to the men who are ordained to administer them; and, on the other hand, from a very confused and erroneous view of the method of a sinner's justification before God. The doctrine of the New Testament is, that we are justified by faith only in a Redeemer's merit. The invariable tendency of the human mind, is to rob the Saviour of the honour which exclusively belongs to Him, by becoming a co-worker in the procurement of acceptance. If by the administration of any outward rite—even supposing that much is insisted upon concerning the spirit of him who administers and the spirit of the recipient—grace is necessarily conferred, then there is at least the appearance of human co-operation in the matter of procuring acceptance for the guilty. There is quite enough in such a doctrine to flatter the disposition, which prompts a person to be seeking out some other way of justification, distinct from an exclusive reliance on the Mediator's obedience unto death.

To recur, however, to the question before us—Does the Church of England teach that all baptized persons are spiritually regenerate? To this we unhesitatingly reply in the negative. I do not find that she does so in her articles, nor yet in her services for the administration of that sacrament. Her twenty-seventh article expressly states, "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God." Throughout this article does the church teach, that baptism is anything else than a sign? It is not only a sign of difference, it is also a *sign* of regeneration or new birth. But how can it be the sign, and also the thing signified? To maintain that there is any such ne-

cessary connection between the sign and the thing signified, as that the partaker of the one is necessarily partaker of the other, would be to destroy the sacramental character of the rite altogether; just what the Romanist does, in respect of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by pretending that the elements positively undergo a transmutation from bread and wine, into the actual body and blood of the Saviour. The framers of the article I have just read, were careful to guard against this error, by repeating twice in the course of the same passage, that baptism is the sign, and not the thing signified.

From what is stated in the article, let us pass however to the service itself for the administration of the sacrament. Now it is not to be denied, that in this service, the minister is directed to begin with a solemn address upon the necessity of the new birth. The congregation are instructed to join in supplication that the child to be baptized may be washed and sanctified with the Holy Ghost; that it may, coming to holy baptism, receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration. The minister further prays, that God would sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; whilst after sprinkling has been used in the Triune name of God, the whole congregation unite in yielding hearty thanks "that it hath pleased God to regenerate the infant with the Holy Spirit, and to incorporate him into His holy church." It must be confessed, this language is strong, and I will candidly own, liable to misconception. It is certain from well authenticated letters of the Reformers themselves, that they were doubtful as to the propriety of some of the expressions. Yet we should be in error to conclude from any portion of what has been repeated, that the church intended to intimate, every baptized person is spiritually regenerate. Such a view, is contradicted by other parts of the baptismal service itself; and by statements, of not infrequent occurrence in other portions of the liturgy. The prayer which immediately follows, after baptism has taken place, is inconsistent with the notion that spiritual regeneration has necessarily occurred. At the same time, the church holds, that the blessing of spiritual regeneration may be the possible accompaniment of baptism. She holds that God may be pleased so far to honour His own ordinance as to confer the inward grace, at the same time that we make use of the outward token; and holding this to be possible, although as experience proves in the case of baptism rare, can we do less than pray that such a blessing may be vouchsafed? or less than in the judgment of charity, trusting that it may have taken place, offer up thanksgiving for the boon? The services of our church, are necessarily constructed on the expectation, that they will be used by none but the right-minded. The church speaks on the presumption that her requirements have been obeyed; she acts on the principle inculcated by our Saviour, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." *Believing*, that when we dedicate a child to God in baptism, God may be pleased to accept the dedication, and so to enrich the child with His grace, that it may be sanctified, as it were, from the womb, we pray in faith for the fullest blessing, and are even willing to believe it has been bestowed, so long as there is no evidence to the contrary. At all events, privileges of so exalted a character have been conferred upon the child in baptism, its *state*, if not its nature, has undergone a change which may be characterized as a regeneration, and for this we can render thanks. We deny not the possibility that whatever is implied in spiritual regeneration may accompany baptism also. In the large majority of instances, however, experience proves that the new birth which is unto righteousness, has to be effected at a subsequent period altogether. Language is used by the church, which appears to favour the notion that spiritual regeneration accompanies baptism; but if you infer from hence that the church holds spiritual regeneration to be the invariable effect of baptism, we can only reply, that her articles, her other teaching forbids the supposition. As well might it be urged that because the epistle to the Corinthians, has this superscription: "To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints"—therefore, all those, who, in an after part of the epistle, the apostle warmly rebukes, were both sanctified and called to be saints. We know that the abusers of the Lord's Supper at Corinth, and the incestuous person concerning whom Paul wrote to have him excommunicated, though as members of the Corinthian church they were included in the title which heads the epistle, yet to them it did not individually pertain. And just in the same way, whilst we hope that spiritual regeneration may be vouchsafed; whilst we pray for the blessing, and even thank God on the charitable supposition that it has been dispensed, yet there is no one prayer of our liturgy; there is no part of our service besides, which is not in harmony with the truth that God is the alone Author, and faith which is of His imparting, the alone instrument in the production of that spiritual

regeneration, to which the apostle refers, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

II. We can touch but briefly upon the second clause of the text, which furnishes as I have already stated, the test of Christian character. "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." Now there seems to be in this clause, an allusion to the love which a believer ought to have for one who is partaker of the same faith, just on this simple ground; that he is a fellow believer. In another passage the apostle argues that having been loved of God with such a surpassing love, we ought to love one another. "Beloved," says he, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" where the drift of the observation is to inculcate a disposition of Christian love towards all who have been made the objects of redeeming love on the part of God. Certain it is, that the circumstance of our having been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, constitutes a powerful reason for the suppression of all angry or resentful feelings towards others, and for indulging rather the opposite dispositions of charity and good-will. Whatever cause you may find in a fellow creature for dislike or hatred, there cannot be a hundredth part of the reason for your dislike of him, which there is, for your being an object of aversion to God; and if the love of God for man, was so intense that it broke through every opposing barrier, and forced a way for its exercise over every obstacle, oh! surely in proportion as we become godlike, we shall yearn over our fellow men with somewhat of that same eager solicitude, which occupies the breast of Divinity itself, for their pardon and salvation. And this love must have scope for exercise. It will find means to display itself, in seeking out the present or the eternal welfare of our fellow men. The test, however, supplied by our text seems more to refer to the "love of the brethren," than to the love of a believer on Christ for men in general. "Every one," it is said, "that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." There is a love which ought to animate every Christian's heart for all mankind—all having been included in the same wondrous scheme of redemption—all being candidates for the like immortality—all being fellow travellers and fellow probationers—exposed to the like perils, encompassed with the like dangers, all should be united in the bonds of one common brotherhood of sympathy and affection. There is a special fellowship of love, however, which ought to exist between those who are members of the same household, and fellow partakers of the same grace. The Saviour loved all mankind—but He loved some with a special love. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" and even of the twelve disciples there was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" with peculiar fondness. We, too, ought to love the brethren with a special love; those who are one with us in faith should be one in affection. Yea, and observe, so decisive is the test which St. John gives, that he makes it to be an evidence of our having been begotten, that we love those who are begotten of God: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Christian brethren, do we come up to this test? Ask yourselves this simple question, is it a bond of sympathy between you and a fellow creature, whatever the rank or sphere in which that fellow creature moves, if he be known to be a believer on Jesus? Hard test this for the proud, and the selfish, and the worldly-minded! Oh! if there be any such amongst you, that you might be brought to a very close and serious self-examination! Can you be a disciple of Jesus, when it is no attraction whatever towards a fellow creature to know that he is a fellow disciple also? Does not the want of this attraction prove that you cannot have been, as yet, born again? Should you not go from this sanctuary to cry to Him who never turns away from the cry of the lowly, although He despises the proud and the self-righteous, and to ask of Him the "new heart and the right spirit?" For bear in mind, "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

THE MIND OF CHRIST.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

PREACHED IN ISLINGTON CHAPEL,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the London Missionary Society.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—Philippians ii. 5—8.

THE apostle Paul, who had much attachment to the church at Philippi, the members of which eminently abounded in grace, knew well how much their happiness and their usefulness depended upon their being united. And therefore he was anxious to guard them against all contention and jealousy. “Fulfil ye my joy,” he said, “that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” Now to attain this godly concord, this brotherly feeling towards each other, it was needful that they should exercise other Christian graces, without which it is hopeless to attain concord in any society. The first was, that they should be unfeignedly humble : “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” If God grants the members of a church to have individually a deep sense of their sinfulness, their weakness and their ignorance, a corresponding desire for the help of Divine grace, and a corresponding disposition to be alike in each others’ virtues, then such a church remains in harmony and brotherhood. But the second disposition which the apostle desired them to cultivate, in order that they might maintain in the midst of the heathen this brotherly kindness towards each other, was that of disinterestedness : “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” If the members of a church are heartily seeking each other’s welfare, then on all those occasions which trouble the tempers of men, (and they might be disposed from variety of judgment in any minor matter to be disunited), that habitual desire for each other’s welfare and comfort would tend to maintain their brotherly union. And therefore the apostle, desiring that this Christian church should shine as a light among the heathen by their brotherly concord, desired that they should abound in these gracious dispositions of lowliness and of disinterestedness. Nothing could be more likely to make them cherish these gracious dispositions with care, than setting before themselves often the example of their Lord and Saviour. To this the apostle, therefore, turned their attention, in the words of our text : “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

He who thus manifested this condescension and this zeal in behalf of His people, was one who before His incarnation was “in the form of God.” Now

"God is a Spirit," and therefore has no material form; and the expression "being in the form of God" must mean, being in His condition, having the glory which God possesses manifested to His creatures as God. Before He became incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ was in the glory of God. As when He became incarnate, He was "in the form of a servant"—that is, in the condition of humiliation of a servant; as, then, when He was upon our earth He was in the condition of a servant, so, before He came on our earth, He was in the condition of God. And having the glory of God before He assumed human nature, and consequently in eternity, He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He was one, absolutely one, with God the Father, in nature, in design, in thought, in feeling—in all things; and this glorious God, of whom we read that His "goings forth were of old from everlasting," who was the "Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father"—the Father of eternity to His people, even when He became Emmanuel—this glorious Person, who, when He came on earth, came as the effulgence of God, "the brightness of His glory," (as we read, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person,") the visible representation of His being on earth, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"—He it was of whose condescending disinterestedness on the part of sinners we read in this passage. Let us briefly and simply consider the steps of the humiliation of Jesus Christ our Saviour, set before us in it as a pattern.

"He made Himself of no reputation." When the apostle speaks of what He "made Himself," as incarnate, he is evidently referring to what He was on this earth—to a condition in which He was not previously. It relates, therefore, to His life on earth; and the apostle describes, that when He was on this earth He had divested Himself of His glory; that in His human life on earth, there was scarcely any shining forth of that Divine glory which was His own from eternity, and His own of right. He might have assumed this at His pleasure when He was here on earth; but He divested Himself of it. He appeared on earth shorn of those beams of Divine glory which might have dazzled all beholders, overwhelmed all opposition, destroyed at once scepticism, and compelled the world to bow before Him; but He meant to be kinder and better to us than this. He was to accomplish a work of transcendent generosity, and He was to appeal to our faith, whether we would believe that of which He gave us adequate, though not overwhelming evidence. He would try the principles of men, and see whether, their hearts being upright, they would yield to adequate evidence of His Divine goodness, or whether, their hearts being corrupt, they would invent various forms of opposition to His truth, repel their own happiness in rejecting Him, and then stand before Him to give an account, not of their infirmity, but of their obliquity of heart. He came into this world divested, then, of His Divine glory.

But He took another step of humiliation, in order to accomplish our happiness, and when He was upon earth assumed the form, or the condition of a creature. He "took upon Him the form of a servant." All things serve God; and when He became an intelligent creature of God, then He was in "the form of a servant" to God—voluntarily assuming the obligation to obey the law of which He was the Divine originator. He might have come to our earth to establish His universal dominion visibly as God; He might have set up His great white throne, the throne of judgment, summoned the nations to His bar, manifested such glory as would have made the proudest tremble and the most sceptical believe, and thus caused the millions of mankind to serve Him as God. But He "took upon Him the form of a servant"—a creature; coming down to this world, not to reign, but to serve—to obey the law in our behalf, and work out by His perfect fulfilment of the law of God a perfect and an everlasting righteousness for those who had nothing but demerit to offer to God.

When He determined on this humiliation He might have assumed the brightness of some archangel, shone forth with a majesty with which angelic beings

have sometimes been clothed, manifested on earth such power as His own angel exhibited, when in one night He alighted on the invading hosts of Assyria, and millions of soldiers were found, without effort, noise or opposition, dead not on the field of battle, but in the tents of their camps. But instead of assuming a terrible effulgence, in exhibiting such archangelic powers, when He came on earth He was "made in the likeness of men;" not such as they were when Adam and Eve were formed in perfection of body and soul by the hand of their Creator—not perfect as they, in a world of perfect comfort and blessedness; but He assumed the likeness of a race that was fallen and corrupt, and though sharing in none of their sinfulness He shared in every infirmity which that sinfulness had caused. Our great and gracious Redeemer would not shrink from this humiliation, but was made in all things like those He came to redeem and save, that He might be a perfect substitute for us in obedience and in suffering, that He might manifest His sympathy with us in all our trials and in all our weaknesses. Therefore would He be like us in all things; and because He did not assume the charge of rescuing angels, but meant to rescue the seed of Abraham, all who were the children of Abraham by sharing in Abraham's faith—therefore "it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be to them a merciful and a faithful High Priest;" never forgetting the work assigned Him to do, never deserting the feeblest of those committed to Him, but being merciful to all their infirmities, and ready to forgive all their sins.

This was much, but it was not the lowest step of humiliation to which our blessed Lord consented. He was "made in the likeness of men," it is true, and that was a strange humiliation for God the Son; but when He was on earth He was to teach the multitude, He was to save the mass, He was to preach the Gospel to the poor, He was to set an example to all men of brotherhood to one another, He was to prove to men how He could share in all their feelings; and therefore He would not take even the majesty with which a man is sometimes on this earth surrounded. It was easy for Jesus, when He came into this world as God's Messiah, to have placed His throne above the thrones of the mightiest monarchs of the earth; each city of the world might have been a seat of His glorious empire; He might have compelled princes and generals and armies and philosophers all to serve their Lord and to sustain His throne; He might have summoned the world of genius to celebrate His greatness; He might have made all nature tributary to His human honours, and erected such a throne on this earth as should not only have eclipsed the splendours of any previous conqueror, but have left nothing to mankind to learn and nothing to invent; the wisest and best constitution, the highest kinds of legislation, the most advanced forms of civilisation—all that has since been wrought out by the potent and ever-renewed energy of man in the discoveries of the arts and sciences—everything that has since that day mitigated the sum of human trials or conduced to human comforts, might at once have been poured forth from the mind of Jesus upon this world, making the most earthly recognise that He was the world's universal Benefactor, and compelling those who have no fear of God and no care for eternity to bow down to Him as the greatest and the best of the sons of men, compared with whose glory the victories of David were as nothing and the wisdom of Solomon was folly. But our Lord, on the contrary, when He came on earth was "found in fashion as a man;" He "humbled Himself" even then. His home was a cottage, His friends were peasants, His attendants were only those that were afflicted with disease or oppressed with sorrow; none of the great and the gay waited on Him in His painful ministry; no man saw in His appearance anything of the world's dignity or honour; He was poor among the poor, an itinerant preacher of righteousness among a poor and superstitious people, in a despised province of the empire of Rome. He manifested then so little of glory, perfect as His glory was and much as occasionally His Almighty power was exercised and displayed for the welfare of men, that the whole impression produced upon the

light and earthly-minded multitudes by whom He was surrounded was expressed by His own prophet long before—"He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And yet there is happiness among the poor. Thank God, that He has much more equally distributed His favours than many suppose. There may be the highest virtue, there may be the most blessed contentment, there may be the most intense affection, there may be the highest moral worth and dignity, even in the poorest cottage. Much of this there was in the home of Jesus. But He might have made that home free from all the assaults of sorrow. It was far otherwise with Him. He sought out a lonely solitude, where His holy soul might commune unmolested with nature and with God. He did not place Himself in some select society, where every countenance He looked on was a loving one, and every heart beat in unison with His own; but He lived in a place proverbial for its baseness, and He preached to a people who everywhere treated Him with scorn. Wherever He went, He met with the contumely of the Scribes and Pharisees, and found perverse and continued opposition to His holy doctrine and perfect character; yea, the world hated Him, because He testified of it that its works were evil.

All this our generous Saviour did for our happiness; and then came the last step of humiliation which was possible. I know of none lower. He could not come lower than He did. It was needful that in working out that difficult and painful atonement He should come as low as an innocent creature could come; and He never faltered; His love was "stronger than death:" and therefore He would not even have a tranquil and quiet death to finish a life of constantly accumulating sorrow. He had laboured hard for human welfare; He had met with constant opposition; He lived in perpetual strife; He had seen the nation He came to save rejecting Him; He "came to His own, and His own received Him not;" and then at last He would die for us, not surrounded with honours and enjoying the support of zealous friendship, but He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The Lord of life would die; the author of glory to others would experience the deepest shame. He humbled Himself not to a death of ease and honour, but to a death of the greatest contempt. He would bear on the accursed tree the curse that was due for our transgressions. Realise for a moment the scene of that cross. There was the Messiah of God, to whom all ages had been looking forward, whom prophets had clearly predicted, whose glorious reign on this earth was so powerfully and frequently described, whom all kings were to bow down to and all nations serve, to whose gathered church it was said that all nations should flow, and the consequences of whose dominion were to be universal holiness and peace. He accomplished His task; and the last scene which He witnessed upon earth was a gathered multitude reviling and hooting their own Messiah, as He spread out His arms upon the cross, and had the nails driven through His hands, a spectacle to men and angels; and even there His fellow-sufferers, who acknowledged the justice of the agonising death by which they paid for their crimes against society, found it in their hearts to join their contemptuous revilings to the revilings of the crowd. The last accents which fell upon the ear of the expiring Son of God were accents of hatred and contempt.

Now let us bear in mind, my brethren, that Jesus met all this spontaneously—that He was moved to it by nothing but Divine goodness—that it was needful not for Him, but for us. By one act of His will He might have soared away from sin and sorrow at any moment for ever, or by another act of His will could have prostrated before Him, in helpless and speechless agony, all those proud and rebellious men who under the training and controul of Satan were now conspired against Him upon earth; but He would not pass away from sorrow—He would bear it all, and drink the cup even to its dregs which the Father had put into His hands, because He loved you and me, because He would not have you and me miserable for ever, because He saw there was no

other resource in Omnipotence and Omniscience, (at least of which we have any conception)—because this was the only way in which infinite wisdom and infinite power could accomplish your redemption and mine from unutterable, irremediable, eternal ruin; therefore the Lord Jesus would not falter, but went on to this lowest stage to which an innocent being could sink, dying the death of a malefactor, enduring a punishment pronounced by the law to be accursed of God, and suffering the maledictions of men, a helpless Victim (as it seemed) to the combination of Satanic and human malice: bearing all this that we might go free. You know, and frequently ponder the blessed truth, that what the Lord Jesus suffered on the cross, He suffered strictly as a substitute. He was “bearing our sin in His own body on the tree?” He was bearing the punishment which was due to the Almighty for our sins, and therefore in that suffering has rendered it just that an infinite God should accept us, unworthy though we be, adopt us into His family, bless us with His favour, pour out upon us the Spirit of His grace, cheer us by His providence, comfort us by His promises, throw a clear and steady light upon the dark “valley of the shadow of death,” and tell us that there are mansions prepared for us in His own palace, where we are to dwell for ever.

The Lord Jesus Christ has, in His unmerited goodness, done this for those who were so guilty and so alienated, who (if they love Him now at all) love Him only because He has broken the pride of their opposition, and constrained by His own Spirit their reluctant hearts. He did all this for those who would have been this day His bitter enemies, if His own love had not conquered them. Then, my brethren, let me ask, what are those returns which we should make to God and man for mercies like these, so freely received by the unworthy?

The apostle has intimated to us one practical conclusion, to which this review, however cursory, of the humiliation of Jesus Christ ought to lead. That one conclusion I heartily desire to impress on your minds and my own. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” There is the lesson which the apostle would teach us from Christ’s voluntary humiliation and suffering on our behalf; and it is the lesson to which at once the conscience of each enlightened and renewed person gratefully responds. What should the rescued sinner do, but try to be like his great Deliverer? What should mark the life of any one of us, hoping to be with our Lord in glory for ever, but that we should express our gratitude and respect to Him now? And that gratitude and respect must surely be manifested by imitating His temper. If we consider in what manner God the Father has appreciated the work of Jesus Christ, we may learn how we should appreciate it too; if we see the reward to which He has justly ascended, as the consequence of His humiliation, we may learn how we should estimate the sufferings of Christ and the love which prompted them; because, “if God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,” a consequence of that painful but transitory suffering has been, that Jesus Christ is now the Monarch of the universe, seated at His Father’s side, wielding Omnipotence in the execution of His high office, and served willingly and cheerfully by all the creatures of God who have not fallen. And glorious as He is on His throne in heaven now, higher glory (at least in reference to the myriads of mankind) awaits Him, when returning to judgment He shall manifest a contrast so unexpected and so overwhelming, to those who in their levity and their folly resisted His claims and denied His goodness here; for at that day, “at the name of Jesus all things in heaven and earth and under the earth shall bow,” and not one tongue in the universe will be found to mutter one syllable of blasphemy, or dare to harbour one thought of dishonour towards the returning Monarch. They will wonder why He did not show this magnificence on earth; not knowing how far more tran-

secundant than even Divine magnificence was the moral lustre of a love that has no parallel, and a humility that condescended so low, and a generosity that was manifested for those so unworthy, and could never rest till those who were poor in virtue and poor in circumstances should share in His own riches in the paradise of God. But they will see Him then. There will be splendour enough then; and at length unbelief will become impossible. It is easy now, when the judgment is warped by the passions, when men shape their opinions by fashion rather than by truth, to deny and to despise Him; it will be impossible then. But faith will be useless then, when at length it becomes the result of irresistible evidence that Christ is a Saviour to others, but not a Saviour to them. It will be a glorious hour, when the Lord Jesus Christ summons those who once treated Him so lightly, and those who learned humbly and diligently to serve and love Him; it will be a glorious hour, when at length He shall be rewarded with the universal applause and adoration which He deserves, and even His enemies by compulsion shall bow the knee, while His friends in triumph rival each other in the expressions of a gladness and a gratitude which eternity itself will be needful fully to develope.

Now if the Almighty God has, as the just reward of Christ's sufferings, exalted Him to this glory, because He has saved millions by an unparalleled kindness, because He has honoured God by an unflinching obedience, because He has illustrated and glorified the law of God, His government and His attributes, in a manner which no other creature nor all other creatures could have done, and because His own transcendent moral glory makes him worthy of the universal token, that He reigns who reigns of right, He reigns whose reign must diffuse unknown bliss throughout the universe; therefore, my brethren, I ask those who have trusted in Christ, those who know Him and who own Him as a Saviour, whether they too ought not so to appreciate this loving humiliation of Christ as to cherish towards Him the mind which He has cherished towards them. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." I doubt not that the enlightened mind of every believer in Christ here at once answers, It is right; I doubt not that there is not a moment's hesitation in any one who has learned the claims of Christ, and who knows Him to be a Saviour for sinners, that this is unquestionably a simple duty, to cherish towards Christ the mind that He has manifested towards us. But is it done? We are so apt to be content with conclusions of the understanding, and to leave them unaccomplished, or at least half unaccomplished. Is this, then, done? Do we in this assembly cherish towards the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we own, whom we trust, without whom we know that we shall never get to glory, by whom we feel that we shall climb to its heights—do we cherish towards Him the mind which we know He has displayed towards us? It was lowly, disinterested zeal which He manifested for us: what is it we manifest for Him? Is it lowly disinterested zeal? Are we ready to sacrifice everything for His honour? Are we willing to labour in His service? If so, do we labour? Does our own interest, and the interest of our family, and our comforts in life occupy but a small part of our thoughts and affections, and the glory of Christ and the promotion of His cause the larger part? Has He distinctly and undeniably the first place in our affections and our thoughts, and earthly objects and earthly friendships the secondary and subordinate place? We hope to be with Him ere long—we do expect to be happy in His presence for ever; we have one hope, and that is enough for us—we want no more. We dream not of any other appeal, when we shall stand before the awful God, than this—that Jesus Christ came to die the death of the cross for us; and that will make us happy for ever—happy as the persecutor Saul, happy as the dying thief has been for ages. We expect to be happy too. Do we, then, my Christian brethren, daily cherish towards our great Deliverer the mind that He has manifested to us? Oh! what coldness and ingratitude does He see who is the witness of our daily conduct, who knows us not only in the house of prayer, but in our own dwellings and in our intercourse with the world! Does He know that from Sabbath to Sabbath, throughout every day of the busy week, in the throng of the city as well as in the solitude of the chamber, we do cherish towards Him the mind which He has manifested towards us? He has loved us with a surpassing and unparalleled and imperishable kindness: are we labouring at least, though at an infinite distance, to feel a corresponding gratitude to Him? Do we think of Him often? Do we meditate on Him frequently? Do we begin each day by blessing His holy name? Do we desire to give Him honour in the world? Do we love His people for His sake? Are we anxious to get rid of every fault by which we might dishonour Him? Do we consent to any unchristian temper? Are we

ashamed and grieved when by any such temper or deportment we dishonour or displease Him? Are we striving to reach His glorious goodness? Are we depending daily on His grace in prayer, to give us this success? Do we hold frequent and holy communion with Him? Are we looking forward with joy and tranquil hope to the day when we shall see Him as He is? You know we ought to do so, brethren; and if you recognise the duty, go to your Christian homes, made already so happy and so light by His own goodness—go to them with this humble earnest prayer, that you may serve Him better, and be more manifestly like Him in the rest of your course on earth.

But the apostle did not urge this conclusion respecting our Lord Himself, but respecting His people with whom we may have intercourse here. It was with reference to them that he said—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." It was the Christians at Philippi, who were no reluctant learners, and whom the mighty power of grace had prepared for every other lesson in Christ's school, that he urged to manifest in their deportment to one another the lowliness, the disinterestedness, and therefore the benevolence of Christ. My brethren, do we likewise cherish these tempers towards one another? I know that we recognise the duty—it is quite certain that every Christian man here feels that it is supremely reasonable that he should live in this world as Christ lived, just as far as His perfection may be imitated by our infirmity. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked," is not more the decision of inspiration than the dictate of our natural understanding. We own it, we acknowledge it, and what is better we are pleased with it. We do not shrink from Christ's commands, and we know that those commandments are not grievous. Every precept that a Being who died to save us gave to us, must be dictated by the very love that nailed Him to the cross at Calvary; every such command must be "holy, just and good." Others would evade His law—Christians never would; others would strive to convince themselves that He does not require so complete an obedience—Christians only complain of the infirmity with which they follow that which is for their happiness and His glory. But yet with all this, are we not in our sinful infirmities content with low attainments; or at least, while condemning our infirmities, do we not acquiesce in them? Are there not Christians here, who often mourn over their shortcomings, and yet remain the same? Week after week, do you not utter similar laments, and yet notwithstanding those lamentations remain unaltered? Do you complain that instead of being lowly like Christ, you still have so much unmortified pride—that instead of being disinterested like Christ, you have to struggle with perpetual selfishness? Do you mourn that instead of being united with all His people, as far as you know them, there are such angry emotions so frequently arising in your minds? If these are the lamentations which we are compelled to utter, I ask, my brethren, whether we remain still the same, from week to week, perhaps from year to year? Ought it to be so? Can you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ meant that our faults should master us, and we not master them? It is not so. He has given us transcendent helps; He has urged us by adequate and constraining motives; He has set before us the highest pattern; He has told us His own holy will concerning us; and He has said to each—"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! brethren, let us feel how urgent the duty is of this constant growth in all that is praiseworthy in our relations to one another; let us feel how entirely it becomes us not to waste a single day, but to let all who know us perceive that we are daily effecting some victory over self, daily growing up more into the mind that was in Christ, and living more like those who have been adopted by such a Father in heaven, redeemed by such a Saviour, sanctified by such a Spirit—who are the professed disciples of such a revelation, and are looking forward to such a glorious home. Let the world see it; and brethren, day by day, in our intercourse with our fellow-Christians, and even in our intercourse with the world, "let that mind appear in us, which was also in Christ Jesus." Resolve on it, and it is to a great degree done; determine on it, as you would determine on any great object to which you would set your energies in life. Say with the help of God, that whatever can be done by the diligent, humble, prayerful, painstaking use of means, shall be done by us; that every sinful infirmity in your characters as disciples of Christ—not by one powerful volition, but by a patient daily victory over self, shall be diminishing, for the glory of Him by whose name you are called, and with whom you hope shortly to reign.

But lastly, we cannot in this connection fail to notice this great peculiarity in the example of Jesus Christ—that His benevolence was exhibited wide as

the world itself, and exhibited to those who were not only strangers to His goodness, but would be enemies to it. If Christ divested Himself of the glory of heaven, and "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man," and then "humbled Himself," when He was "in fashion as a man," and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," for sinners, for us and for those who have merited like perdition and were in the same road to ruin—then what do we who are thus saved by grace owe to the nations of the world? What do we owe to careless sinners who are around us? I say, owe; for although there is in Christian beneficence much that is spontaneous, and the claim cannot be made by others upon their time and their exertion, it is due from them to Christ's elect, according to those remarkable words—"I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also." When the apostle Paul thought of fighting the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Rome, or of placing himself beneath the immediate grasp of one whose tyranny was more ruthless than that of the lion and the wolf—when he thought that in preaching the Gospel at Rome he might meet a torturing martyrdom, it seemed to him no manifestation of a strange heroism, but rather the simple fulfilment of a debt. He was a debtor to his fellow-creatures, because he was a debtor to Christ; and there was no degree of self-denying devotedness for the happiness of man which the apostle did not look upon simply in the light of a debt to Christ. There is no such liberality in other religions; it is the peculiar characteristic of the religion of Christ, that His followers, whom He has loved, are for His sake debtors to all mankind, to do them all the good in their power. And you rejoice in this liberality; and therefore have you formed yourselves into a Missionary Association; and when you hear of the preaching of the Gospel to the Hindoo and the Chinaman, you do not, like a thoughtless world, pronounce it to be fanaticism, but you feel it to be worthy of those who have such a Benefactor as Christ their Captain. Let this spirit grow amongst us; not with reference to the heathen only, though they should come within the wide sphere of Christian beneficence, but towards all the ungodly, towards all that are lost. And it is a far better proof of genuine benevolence and real gratitude to Christ, to show this pity for the unconverted within our own dwellings or at our very doors, than it is to listen to any tales, however gladdening, of the triumphs of Christ's Gospel among the heathen, or to show our approbation of the faithful and sometimes heroic labours of the missionaries of Christ in other lands, by our small contributions towards their support. This is a work which has never been heard of since apostolic times, as it is now beginning to be accomplished; it is well worthy the support of every Christian, and can only excite a sneer in those who are profoundly ignorant or completely selfish; and Christian men must feel the force of it in proportion to their intelligence and gratitude. But again I say to you, my Christian brethren, that it is those who are at your own doors—it is those in your shops and counting-houses—it is those in your families and neighbourhoods, whom you know to be in the greatest danger of perishing—it is the young men in your employment, who have never turned to Christ—it is the unconverted members of your own families, towards whom you should especially manifest "the mind that was in Christ"—the most lowly and disinterested kindness and patience, that nothing can exhaust—a benevolence perfectly unequivocal, and a prayerful and earnest desire to make them holy and happy for time and eternity. This is the mind that has been in Christ towards us, and the mind that should be in us towards them. May His grace help our infirmity! What we know to be our duty, may His merciful Spirit enable us to accomplish; and may the result of our frequent meditations on His humiliation be to lead us to discharge these duties somewhat better towards others and towards Him.

THE MEDIATORIAL WORK, GLORY AND CLAIMS OF CHRIST.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. JAMES PARSONS.

PREACHED IN THE POULTRY CHAPEL, CHEAPSIDE,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1849.

Before making a collection in behalf of the London Missionary Society.

“Who when He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”—Heb. i. 3.

THERE is one object of contemplation which, amidst the incessant mutations of the present world, remains unchangeably the same—which, while other things lose their hold upon the affections and heart, retains an exhaustless strength and freshness of interest. That object of contemplation is the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the anticipated view of His excellence infused gladness into the bosoms of the pious patriarchs of old, and the vision of His glory rejoiced the hearts of apostles, evangelists and martyrs, so His name is precious wherever the testimony concerning Him is received—exciting hope, and love, and joy, and all the purest emotions which can enter into the mind of man. His name is “as ointment poured forth.” “He is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely;” and as it must be cherished with constant and supreme attachment by the saints on earth, so it constitutes the theme of celestial joy among the countless hosts of the redeemed.

Among the scriptural representations of our Lord Jesus, none perhaps are so complete or so impressive as is the one presented in the epistle before us, addressed by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, to the Hebrews, especially those residing in Palestine, who had embraced the Gospel. There is, as doubtless most of you have remarked, a peculiarity in his mode of illustration arising from the nature of the Mosaic economy; but that peculiarity, so far from contracting, only assists in the larger development of the truth; and as the result of the whole, there is not an attribute or an office of our Saviour but is presented in its varied and wonderful combinations of grandeur and of grace. To a portion of this epistle directly associated with the abrupt and sublime opening of it we are now to request your devout regard; it is in all respects well worthy your serious and prayerful attention.

We purpose to observe from the verse read, that the Lord Jesus has performed a momentous mediatorial work; secondly, that the Lord Jesus is exalted to a splendid mediatorial glory; and thirdly, that the Lord Jesus possesses imperative mediatorial claims.

I. In the first place, we observe, that the Lord Jesus has performed a momentous mediatorial work. We are informed that “He has by Himself purged our sins;” and the work thus indicated may be contemplated in its intrinsic nature, and in its distinguishing attributes.

With regard to the intrinsic nature of the work, it arose, as is suggested, by the expression of our text, from the condition of the human race, as being sinners against God, rebels against His authority, and therefore condemned by His law. And this state of sinfulness must be assumed as characterising them without exception and universally. It is true both of Jews and Gentiles, that “they are all under sin.” “All the world has become guilty before God.” “All have sinned and come short of His glory.” When it is stated that the Lord Jesus has “purged our sins,” the meaning is, that He has offered atonement or expiation for human sin, by the application of which, in a certain appointed way, sin is pardoned and the perpetrator, in place of being obnoxious to punishment, becomes accepted and restored to the enjoyment of the Divine favour.

There are some, we are aware, who have affirmed that the expression employed by the apostle, simply denotes the exertion of a moral influence, and does not at all include or suggest the idea of atonement or expiation. This notion, however, is refuted by the fact, that the word before us is used in the tenth chapter of this epistle in direct and exclusive relation to the sacrifice or

expiation offered for sin, and is identified with the original Hebrew word, which in the Old Testament is employed for the purpose of denoting atonement and expiation expressly. You will observe, when Moses was directed by the Most High, with regard to the consecration of the ancient priesthood, it is said in the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus and the thirty-sixth verse—"Thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering and thou shalt cleanse the altar when thou hast made an atonement"—the word which is now before us. And again, in the thirtieth chapter and tenth verse. "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." We say then without amplification, that "the purging of our sins" consists in the provision for the entire removal of their guilt by atonement or expiation. The office which is thus performed by the Lord Jesus is performed by Him in execution of those priestly functions pertaining to Him as the antitype and consummator of the Jewish hierarchy; and therefore we find in a subsequent part of this epistle, as we read in substance frequently, that He is a "merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

The manner in which He accomplished the office was by descending from the altitude of His primeval dignity to the assumption of human nature by miraculous incarnation, and in that nature which had sinned, though Himself unsullied, spotless and holy, enduring agony and death as a sacrifice to the Divine justice on behalf of the guilty on the cross. The sufferings and death of Christ as constituting atonement or expiation, are frequently stated in this portion of the Divine record and elsewhere, in a manner too palpable for any but the most blinded by prejudice by possibility to overlook. You read in language not to be contravened, that "if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "Now, once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Elsewhere we read that while "we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And again, "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Here then, brethren, stands the testimony—a testimony how distinct, a testimony how valuable to the truth which it certifies—and being the grand, the wondrous display of infinite and everlasting love—being so inseparable from the rescue and final well-being of immortal souls, we might easily expatiate upon it; but resisting amplification we must for the present be content with the evidence afforded, that by the shedding of His own precious and efficacious blood the Lord Jesus Christ has "purged our sins."

Here, then, is the work of the Saviour in its intrinsic nature, an atonement or expiation by His death for sin. Again, observe that work in its distinguishing attributes. The atonement or expiation of the Saviour develops attributes or characteristics constituting on its behalf imperative and overpowering claims. We must for example, remind you of its sufficiency. From the presence, mysterious though real, of His Divine dignity in association with the sufferings of humanity, it possesses a merit which, for its grand purpose, is ineffable, unbounded and infinite. The sufficiency of His expiation is frequently brought before us in Scripture contrasted with the insufficiency of the Jewish offerings, which were typical of this. In this connection you read at the close of the seventh chapter: "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself." And in that wonderfully comprehensive

series of verses at the commencement of the tenth chapter, when the apostle has shown the inefficiency of the legal offerings for the purgation of sin, he says, "when He," the Messiah, "cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Without detaining you by farther reference to the Levitical sacrifices, let me remind you that you must recognise the sufficiency of the Saviour's expiation in relation to guilt—there being no guilt which, through faith, He cannot wipe away. No matter how enormous, aggravated and complicated sin may be, it at once becomes blotted from the records of condemnation as though it had never been; and the transgressors, in place of "the wrath to come" are made inheritors of full acceptance and of everlasting joy.

You must recognise its sufficiency also in relation to time. It is permanent and inexhaustible. Its power operates backward through preceding ages to the fall, imparting saving efficacy to legal offerings presented in faith, and forward to the end of time—requiring no replenishing and no aid in order to accomplish whatever covenant mercy hath willed with regard to the redemption of all the nations of the earth. So that we may address the bleeding victim,

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more!"

But then, while we remind you of the sufficiency of the Saviour's sacrifice we must also remind you of its exclusiveness. For the purpose of expiatory redemption the sacrifice of Christ remains exclusive and alone. It was impossible that any expiation for sin could be offered by any other than Himself; for no other being possesses the requisites to the task—divinity united with humanity; and no other being has been contemplated in the provisions of the everlasting covenant of grace. Atonement, we must impress on you, is inevitably and finally bound up in Christ; and lifted up on the cross He issues from thence the summons which He desires shall attract and concentrate the gaze of the whole universe there—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and besides me there is none else." Here is our one refuge; here is our one foundation! Apart from Him our light is extinguished, our hope is withered, our doom is sealed! Apart from Him our life is abandoned to condemnation, our death to darkness, our judgment to woe, and our immortality to despair! "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved." And so it is in sufficiency and with exclusiveness that "He by Himself hath purged our sins." He has "trodden the winepress alone!"

II. Secondly, we observe that the Lord Jesus is exalted to a splendid mediatorial glory. "Who, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Let us, brethren, endeavour in the first place to observe the station which He holds, the posture which He assumes and the operations which He conducts.

Observe the station which He holds—"On the right hand of the Majesty on high." This expression is intended to denote the revelation of God the Father as He displays the brightest manifestations of His glorious magnificence in heaven. When the Lord Jesus had completed His sacrifice on the cross and had attested the reality of His death by descending into the grave, there commenced and there was performed that wondrous process by which His humiliation and His agony were to be succeeded. He arose from the sepulchre on the third day, having spoiled death and him that had the power of it. For a season He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, after His passion, conversing with His disciples concerning the things relating to His

kingdom, and then He locally ascended in His true body, being refined and ennobled into heaven, where He was made to occupy the station the language before us describes. The station of the Saviour is oftentimes referred to in the historical record under terms of a similar nature. "When He had spoken these words," says one of the evangelists, "He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." "God," says the apostle Paul, "hath set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Having endured the cross and despised the shame "He sat down on the right hand of the throne of God." "He is gone to heaven," exclaims Peter, "and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto Him."

We dare not attempt to conjecture what is the mode of the Divine development which accounts for this reference to "the right hand;" nor dare we venture to conjecture what is the manner in which the glorified body of the Saviour appears analogous to the specified condition. These are matters which must be left to be unveiled and unfolded in the future. We merely notice, that by the expression before us there is signified the honour of the Lord Jesus. The right hand of the sovereign is always esteemed among men as the place of peculiar honour; and the highest honour is offered to our Lord as the incarnate Mediator. In that capacity, and on account of the work, which in that capacity He has performed, "He has a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Here also is signified, along with the honour, the happiness of the Lord Jesus. We find that "the right hand of the Father" is associated with His happiness—"the joy that was set before Him." To be at the right hand of God was "the joy that was set before Him." Thus, in that sublime prophetic ode, where He is described as contemplating His resurrection and ascension, He appeals to His Father—"Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

And what, brethren, must be the pleasures of the Lord Jesus after the endurance of such an agony, after the achievement of such a work—possessing the unutterable satisfaction of His own mind and the ineffable complacency of the Father, the adoration, praise and gratitude of unnumbered multitudes of angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect!" O Thou Babe of Bethlehem, thou Sufferer of Gethsemane and of Calvary, well hast Thou earned and richly dost Thou deserve it all!

You will also observe, along with the station He holds, the posture He assumes. It is said, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High"—a statement of attitude by no means trivial or insignificant. Some perhaps may have observed the difference between the language of our text and some other passages of Scripture. The attitude in which He was observed by the proto-martyr Stephen was that of standing. At the crisis of his martyrdom we read, "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "And they stoned Stephen," he invoking the Lord Jesus, and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." It has been observed by an old Divine that here is only denoted, by figurative expression, a difference of function. It is for the president to sit, it is for the helper to stand; and Stephen having been engaged in mortal conflict with his foes Jesus is represented as standing, indicating that He was his helper—having communicated help already, willing to communicate help still, and when the occasion of help was past, ready, as with open arms, to welcome him to His embrace and receive him as an inheritor of His kingdom. There is no discrepancy between the description here and in the passage before us, although in one Jesus is represented standing, and in the other as sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And here we may observe that rest is denoted. Sitting down is a posture of repose. The Saviour has ceased from His work and has entered into His rest. He has a season of tranquil and calm dignity after the tremendous fights and struggles He sustained against the direst adversaries of God and man. He sits at the right hand of the Father, as denoting His rest.

Here also is denoted His authority. The ruler sits while those around him stand in token of inferiority and of reverence. The Saviour, we know, possesses authority and sovereignty with the Father, as being one with Him, and

all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth. In the emphatic expression of the inspired writer—"He sits and rules upon His throne," as the sign and token of His authority.

Again, here also is denoted His continuance. The attitude before us is the sign and manifestation of permanence. In heaven, whither the Saviour has gone, is His permanent abode—His dwelling-place, His home. And although, for important purposes, He is finally to appear for a season on some external spot to accomplish the grand and wonderful results regarding the consummation of the universe, yet heaven is the place He has prepared for His immortal residence, and thither He is to bring the host of the ransomed by His blood, that in the same home with Himself they may abide in perfection unchangeable and for ever. Thus, brethren, in order to denote His repose, His authority and His continuance, "He hath sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Observe also the operations He conducts. And here it is delightful for us to remember that, while in heaven the Lord is glorified and while in heaven He reposes from the toils and labours of His state of humiliation, He still is employed in avocations of incessant and earnest activity in order to secure the application of His sacrifice and to accomplish the results for which it was designed. "At the right hand of the Majesty on high" He intercedes—He is there still as the Priest of His people—no priest but Him!—all is absorbed, consummated and concentrated in Him. There He presents, in some mode we cannot ascertain or conjecture, the memorials of the sacrifice which once He perfected on the cross of Calvary and He pleads by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, that blessings may descend upon men, that they may be renewed, that they may be purified, that they may be perfected, that they may be privileged and that they may be redeemed, that through the power of the gracious Spirit which has been secured by His sacrifice they may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints. "He is gone," and what a world of poetry as well as sublime truth is in the expression—"He is gone to appear in the presence of God for us." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

"At the right hand of the Majesty on high" He governs. The administration of the universe is committed to His hand. According to the expression of the earlier part of the verse, He "upholds all things by the word of His power." There is not a distant star but is sustained and guided by Him; there is not an intelligent being in all its faculties and passions but is controlled and managed by Him; there is not a material thing vast or minute but is wielded and conducted by Him. He has all power. The universe from its utmost limits is His own. In relation to the world in which we live, while the operations of Providence are at His bidding, He works in a special mode. It is His right and He will redeem it to Himself. He employs therefore His Gospel, the truth which discloses and explains His attributes and functions, rendering effectual the announcements of truth by the power of the Spirit secured by His death and intercession, and thus accomplishing the recovery and conversion of individual men, overturning the vast combination of evils which have existed for so long a succession of ages and crushed millions in degradation and ruin, and finally accomplishing the triumph of His own dominion of peace, righteousness, purity, and happiness until all things shall be subdued unto Himself; for He shall have dominion and glory and the kingdom, the people of all nations and languages shall serve Him. "At the right hand of the Majesty on high," He is, according to the expression of the apostle in a subsequent chapter, "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Calm in His Divine dignity and yet as Mediator intensely looking down upon this fallen orb, watching all its movements on its orbit—watching all the revolutions of human passion on the surface of its sphere, and marking how under the guidance of His power and grace there is a gradual evolving of the results of "the travail of His soul"—"Expecting till all His enemies be made His footstool." "He must reign till His enemies be made His footstool." Then when His reign has been long continued so as to glorify the attributes and vindicate the government of the Father, completing the economies of Providence and Grace and preparing the gathering of the elect from the four winds of heaven, He will appear with the shout of the archangel and the trump of God, gathering the human family before the bar of His final-tribunal, condemning those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of Jesus to everlasting destruction from His presence and the glory of His power, but summoning those who have been purged from their sins by His blood to stand at His right hand, where they shall be welcomed in the presence of the assembled universe, conducted to His glory

to remain in His presence and to inherit the enjoyments of His mansion for evermore. Here then will be the end. How beautifully do His operations in heaven combine with His sacrifice on earth; how do His sufferings and glory unite in one scheme to justify the anthem which shall at last be sung for ever—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" "Who when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

III. In advancing to the last topic of our discourse, I must still claim your earnest attention. We have to notice, that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses imperative mediatorial claims. The announcement in the text is for the purpose of vindicating and enforcing His claims; and men should do homage to His dignity; they should trust to His merits and devote themselves to His cause.

Men ought to do homage to His dignity. Have you rightly regarded and received the enunciations of truth which have been brought before you, and do you not perceive as the consequence of the whole, that there is in the Saviour a majesty which requires to be honoured and to be adored? He is not to receive partial respect and reverence, as though He was some finite, though it might be still an exalted being. We have penetrated through the veil of His humanity, and we find Him in the splendour and majesty of Godhead. He demands from us, and in His name I now demand from you, the most humble, the most unreserved, the most cordial, the most prostrate adoration of your soul. I will depart from what may be the ordinary custom of the sanctuary, and read the memorable record in its contiguity, from a part of which I address you; and it seems as though it was spoken from the innermost shrine of the temple. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed," or constituted "heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance," that is, by His Divine nature "obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son? And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He saith,' and the passage stands impregnable by criticism, and even sealed and ratified by it, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God,' or rather O God, "even Thy God," descending to the contemplation of His dignity veiled in humanity, "hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." "And," then ascending to the divinity, "Thou, Jehovah"—the passage being a citation from the hundred and second Psalm, the sublime address to the exclusive majesty of heaven, "Thou, Jehovah, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits," and nothing more, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Brethren, I add not a single word. The homage of the heart has doubtless already been rendered. You have felt as did John in the silence of Patmos, when he beheld Him in His majesty, and when he records, "I fell on my face as dead." What remains but for us to reiterate the homage of our hearts—Jesus accept it from my heart, my Lord and my God! Men ought to do homage to His dignity.

They ought also to trust upon His merits—the mediatorial merits of His sacrifice. The Saviour is to be the object of our implicit and cordial faith. Faith is the great commandment. Faith is the instrument of justification. Righteousness is imputed to faith. I stand by the old expression, and I stand by the meaning of the old expression. Righteousness is imputed to faith; and on account of righteousness, "which is unto and upon all them that believe," guilt is cancelled, the curse is revoked, acceptance and eternity are secured. Faith is the instrument of sanctification. Moral influences go

forth from the sacrifice of the Saviour on the cross. It is through belief of the truth that the heart is purged from the dominion of sin as from its condemnation and punishment. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;" and thus is meetness secured to them for "the inheritance of the saints in light." And faith, thus the instrument of justification and sanctification, becomes the instrument of salvation. What more is needed than to be accepted and morally fitted for the inheritance of the everlasting kingdom? Heaven is begun in faith—faith is the bud, salvation the flower—faith the root, salvation the perfected holy result—faith the dawn of the morning, salvation the fulness of the meridian day. Here is the commencement and the end of the career—"the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul." One claim then is, that we should believe. When the Saviour trod the deserts and mountains of Judæa He summoned men to believe—when He was passing from earth to enter His splendours, He gave the general commission to His disciples to teach that all men should believe; and now in the ministry of the Gospel, though nearly 2,000 years have passed away since His retirement, there is a constant coming down from heaven to earth of the one message to believe. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here is your position to-night. Either you are trusting to His merits and now receiving the purgation of your sins and preparation for the inheritance of heaven, or bearing the burden of sin in condemnation and pollution upon yourselves and ripening fast for the deepest abysses of irremediable perdition. Oh! my fellow sinners, you who yet are estranged from Christ, I pray you consider. You may contribute of your property for others, but oh! first of all, regard your own immortal souls. I think I would not, were I pining in hunger, refuse to take the banquet of salutary food—I think if I were parched and burnt with thirst I would not refuse the chalice of living waters. I think if I were destitute of clothing, in beggary and in pauperism, I would not refuse the garments of beauty and of adornment. I think if I were standing upon the blasted heath, without a shelter, exposed to the pelting of the storm while the artillery of heaven was moving upward and upward, approaching the zenith whence it must pour out all the magazines of its desolation, I would not refuse the refuge from the tempest. You are perishing with hunger, and here is the feast of fat things; you are parched and burnt with thirst, here is the living waters springing up to everlasting life; you are in nakedness and beggary, here are the garments of righteousness and of salvation; you are exposed to the tempest shelterless, houseless, homeless, here is the refuge from the wrath which is to come. And who amongst you will venture to delay or to refuse? Oh! none, for all is prepared, with a blissful welcome; come and yield yourselves in grateful trust to Him, "who by Himself has purged our sins." Lest you should hesitate, He calls you Himself, and the sweet tones of the music of His voice seem to descend from heaven to earth to assure you, "him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Men then ought to trust upon His merits.

Finally, men ought to devote themselves to His cause. He has brought men to rest upon His merits and to rejoice in His sacrifice, that they may proclaim that sacrifice to others; and it is through the enunciation of the truth regarding His sacrifice upon the cross that the Spirit is to descend, and that the children of men in all nations are finally to be attracted to Him. We are His witnesses and His messengers to the unconverted world, and without entering on a theme so comprehensive, and which might be so easily amplified, I only tell you that there is no adequate testimony that you have done homage to His dignity and trusted in His merits, except also you devote yourselves to His cause. You have to look to Calvary and then to heaven—you have first to contemplate the cross, and then you have to contemplate the seat of reward and intercession at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and combining the result of these glances and of the emotions which properly they must create, you must be filled with love to Him whose love you know to be so vast and infinite to you, and conclude as did the great apostle of the Gentiles—"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

And if you come before Him with the solemn inquiry—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—you see Him as though you beheld His form, glorious yet tender, on the seat of His high enthronement, amid the praises of the skies, looking down in benignity upon you, and pointing whither you are to go, and what you are to attempt. He points you to the masses of the uncon-

verted in the towns and cities of your native land ; He points you across the waters which begird your island, to the millions on the neighbouring continent, and the regions beyond—to the realms down-trodden under the imposture of “the man of sin”—to the vast and extensive realms of heathenism, where hundreds of millions know not His name, or His mercy, or His salvation. He says, ‘There ! that is what you have to do. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature !”’ This is the sum. And shall we do otherwise than bow even in all things to Him ?—our intellect to know Him, our affections to love Him, our consciences to fear Him, our active powers to serve and glorify Him—all things are to be His—until we shall be called from the sphere of devotedness on earth to the highest sphere of devotedness in heaven. Let us come to His altar now—let us consecrate ourselves to His service now ; and while angels and the spirits of the just wait to congratulate the accession of hosts to their labours, let us rejoice that “less than the least of all saints,” after serving and honouring Him, who deserves our all, we shall soon see Him in that abode, of which it is the highest honour that “we shall serve Him day and night in His temple for ever.” This is the tribute due to Him, “who, when He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Men ought to do homage to His dignity, to trust upon His merits and to devote themselves to His cause.

And now, after these illustrations of the theme we have endeavoured to present to you, a few words more, and we have done.

I am not about to attempt what is called in common phrase an application of this address. It has itself been its own application ; and I would not judge so harshly of those who have constituted the mass of the congregation, as not to believe that many already have brought home and concentrated the application of the subject to themselves.

This only would I impress on you—that if having heard of the Saviour’s expiation, of the Saviour’s exaltation and of the Saviour’s claims, you remain in callousness and estrangedness of heart, you must prepare for a tremendous doom.

Oratory has been so cultivated that every one anticipates according to the art a powerful and impressive peroration ; and my hearers, you to-night shall have a most powerful and a most impressive peroration. Little that has gone before can be permitted even distantly to approach it ; what shall it be ? Not my words. God forbid ! It shall be in the words of this book. Listen to these exhortations and tell us whether they can be more powerful and more impressive. Listen ! “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward ; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him ?” That is the first.

Listen ! “If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” That is the second !

Listen ! “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven : whose voice then shook the earth : but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear : for our God is a consuming fire.”

It would be folly, it would be impiety, for the preacher to utter another word. God hath spoken it, let man be silent and obey. May the Divine Spirit bring us to Him, “who when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Amen.

EARLY IN CHRIST.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH STOWELL, M.A.

PREACHED IN CHRIST CHURCH, NEWGATE STREET,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 29, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Ladies' Charity School, John Street,
Bedford Row.

"Who also were in Christ before me."—Romans xvi. 7.

How wide asunder is the standard which regulates the judgment and desires of the man of God from that which regulates the judgment and desires of the man of the world! This difference is manifested not less in relation to others than in relation to themselves. So, when "the disciple whom Jesus loved" would express his good will towards Gaius, his host, and of the whole church, he does not simply desire for him good luck, prosperity, and health, but he says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest be in health, and prosper even as thy soul prospereth." And so when St. Paul desires to make honourable mention of Andronicus and Junia, his "kinsmen" and his "fellow-prisoners," when he would speak that which he deems to be to their honour, he does not tell us of their intellectual attainments, nor yet of their rank and their fame amongst mankind, but he alludes to them as "of note among the apostles," and more especially as having been "in Christ before himself;" thus clearly intimating that to be early in Christ is a privilege of the highest order and a distinction most deeply to be coveted.

The words of the text, thus understood, suggest two interesting and instructive inquiries—first, what it is to be in Christ, and, secondly, what is the privilege of being early in Christ. May the Spirit of God be with us in His own power and living energy, whilst we dwell on these momentous topics.

"To be in Christ" is an expression recurring so continually in the New Testament Scriptures, that he must be a very heartless or thoughtless student of the sacred Word who has not been attracted by it, and been deeply solicitous to ascertain its full import. It is ordinarily understood to mean no more than to be a Christian, and more than this it cannot mean if we understand what it is to be a Christian aright; but the views entertained of what it is to be a Christian are often fearfully erroneous, as they are very manifold. Some suppose that to be a Christian is nothing more than to be acquainted with the general doctrines of Christianity, and to admit them and approve them. But if this were all, then how many who afterwards apostatised from the faith, how many who died denying the Lord who had bought them, must have been Christians! You may learn creeds and catechisms and systems of divinity as you will, but if you go no further in your religion, it will profit you nothing.

All such knowledge may only "puff up," while "charity edifieth;" and "though you had all knowledge, so that you could understand all mysteries," yet if you "had not charity,"—love to God and love to man—it would still be "nothing." Others suppose that to be "in Christ" means no more than to profess to be Christians; but Jesus says, "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven; for, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." 'But to be a Christian,' then, it may be rejoined, 'is surely to have been baptised into Christ's name, and admitted into Christ's visible church.' It is to be a Christian so far as pledges and covenant and obligations extend; it is to be a Christian so far as the infant is concerned, who cannot give evidence whether he be a Christian or not; but so soon as the child comes to years in which he can take his vows upon himself, then, while God on His part will assuredly keep and perform His pledges, on the part of the young Christian there must be a solemn observance of his own covenant engagements; otherwise he maketh his baptism void. St. Paul, in that striking description of the kindred ordinance of circumcision under the law, which he gives in this very epistle, speaks in language most clearly applicable to baptism, which under the Gospel has taken the place of circumcision. In the second chapter, beginning at the twenty-fifth verse, the apostle thus reasons: "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God." How literally may this be applied to the kindred ordinance of baptism! Baptism verily profiteth, if thou keep the Gospel—but if thou be a breaker of the Gospel, thy baptism is made void. For he is not a Christian, which is one outwardly; neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh,—putting away the filth of the flesh—but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and baptism is that of the heart; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, through faith in Christ Jesus; and not in the letter, in the mere outward form; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Therefore you are in Christ as baptised members of His mystic body if you give evidence that you are in Christ by "having your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." Take that beautiful, simple figure which our Redeemer himself employs in order to give us a clear apprehension of our union with Him—the vine with its branches. "I," says He, "am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." All of you who are acquainted with the employment of the gardener know that when he desires to graft a scion upon a stem, he annexes it to the stem by means of clay. But it frequently happens that the grafting does not take effect. The scion remains

on the tree, but not in the tree; it does not become vitally incorporated with the tree, and though, through the clay by which it is compassed, it may for a season put forth temporary blossoms and transitory leaves, yet these will soon fade, and the scion, having become dried and dead, will be meet only to be cast into the fire and burned. Even so, if we, as scions, have been grafted into Christ the Master Vine, we may remain in adhesion to Christ, we may remain in connection with His visible church to our dying day; but as the scion only when it becomes united with the stem draws sap and life from the stem, and bears new fruit in virtue of the new life which has been imparted to it, even so, if we be not become partakers of the Spirit of Christ, if Christ do not dwell in us by His quickening Spirit, and we in consequence "have our fruit unto holiness," we may indeed be visibly attached to the mystic Vine, but we shall not be vitally united to that Vine. Dear brethren, this union is indeed a mystery, as all the works of God to us shortsighted creatures are mysteries. In the religion of Christ there are three grand mysteries. The first is the union of Three Persons in the one essential Godhead; the second is the union of two natures in the one individual Person of Emmanuel; the third is the mystic union betwixt Christ and His people: a union which on Christ's part consists in His Spirit dwelling in them, and on their part in their faith evermore clinging to Him. On their part faith apprehends Christ; on His, His Spirit apprehends them. So that they are one with Christ and of one spirit with Christ; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His." But "hereby we know that He abideth in us, because of His Spirit which He hath given us," and that Spirit by working in us proves its reality and its presence in its transforming efficacy; so that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Our spiritual church teaches us the same truth. She tells us, that if, in that holy ordinance to which you are invited to draw near on the next Sabbath day, you do with living faith and true repentance partake of it, then you spiritually eat of the flesh of Christ and drink of His blood, then you dwell in Christ and Christ in you, then you are one with Christ and Christ with you. It is, therefore, a spiritual participation of Christ that constitutes the essence of being in Christ. And as my limb is part of my body in virtue of its vital union with my head, as the stone is part of the building in virtue of its being tied into the structure, as the branch is part of the tree in virtue of its being incorporate with the tree, even so we are one with Christ, the true Foundation, when we are built upon Him by a living faith; we are one with Christ, the mystic Vine, when we derive from Him our spiritual life; we are members of Christ's body incorporate, which is the company of all His faithful people, when the life-blood of His own vitality flows in our souls, so that with the apostle we may humbly yet truly say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Oh! what a blessed thing it is to be "in Christ!" Out of Christ all is darkness, misery, guilt, condemnation, ruin; "in Christ," "there is no more condemnation;" in Christ we have peace—"in Me ye shall have peace;" in Christ we are "freely justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses;" in Christ we have righteousness, even "the righteousness of

God which is by faith ;" in Christ we are led by that Holy Spirit of promise " which is the earnest of the purchased possession ;" in Christ we shall live though we die, we shall sleep in peace, and our very bodies, resting in Him, shall rest in hope of His glorious resurrection. To be in Christ is to have all things here ; " whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," all are then ours when we are in Christ ; for " Christ is God's." And that blessed union no power can rend, no change of circumstances or lapse of time can dissolve. " For I am persuaded," says the apostle, " that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Beloved brethren, to be in Christ, then, is the one thing needful. That yours, everything is yours ; that wanting, all is lost. How precious, then, the privilege of being early in Christ ! St. Paul speaks of it as a thing of high note that Andronicus and Junia were in Christ before himself. Dear younger brethren, to whom we now more especially address ourselves, let us bespeak your patient and earnest attention, whilst we seek to " draw you with cords of love and bands of a man," to yield up your hearts, while yet tender, to the Lord that loved you and redeemed you with His blood. Will you not from this time cry to God, " Our Father, Thou art the guide of our youth ?" To be early in Christ is peculiarly meet and fitting in point of time. Everything is beautiful in its season. This sweet season of spring, how lovely it is ! When the seed sown betimes is watered with the dew of heaven, then comes up the tender blade in its time ; the blade matures into the ear ; the ear becomes the full corn in the ear, ripens by the harvest, and is gathered in before the winter season. Beautiful the order of the seasons in nature ! more beautiful still the order of the seasons in human life ! Spring is youth, youth is the time for the incorruptible seed to be sown deep in the heart ; there to be fructified by the Spirit of God, to spring up as the tender blade of youthful piety, maturing into the full ear of manly Christian character, and mellowing at last into the hoary beauty of old age—" The hoary head is a crown of glory when found in the way of righteousness." But let the season of childhood and youth pass by, and Christ not be sought and the soul not be renewed by the Spirit,—the happy season is lost, the purpose of God is so far marred, and His gracious pleasure in giving childhood and youth before manhood and age is frustrated by unbelief and hardness of heart. To sow in spring is appropriate ; and remember, beloved young friends, that yours is a spring-season which you shall have but once to all eternity. Slight it, pass it by unimproved, it will never return ; you might shed tears of blood, but you could not recall the past.

What a privilege to be early in Christ ! It is to be early out of misery, out of bondage, out of slavery " to the world, the flesh, and the devil." You were pledged at the baptismal font to fight manfully under Christ's banner, against " the flesh, the world, and the devil," and will you, then, be led captive by them at their will ? will you yield yourselves up to be their bondsmen when you are pledged to be Christ's freemen, soldiers of Him whose service is " perfect freedom ?" Can a slave be free too soon ? Can a man who is sick be healed too soon ? Can a man who is in prison be liberated too soon ? Can a man who is under sentence and peril of death be pardoned or ransomed too soon ? And

can you, my dear young friends, come too soon to be healed from the deadly malady of the corruption of your fallen nature? Can you be too soon set free from the prison-house and bondage of Satan and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God? Can you be too soon rescued from the peril of everlasting death and brought into the ark of Christ's true church, where you shall be secure against all life's dangers and life's storms, and in which you shall be borne safely to the shore where the storm is never heard? Dear young brethren, why should any wish to be sick a little longer, to be enslaved a little longer, to be in peril a little longer of perishing everlastingly? What infatuation and madness is it for men to hug their chains, to cherish their diseases, to refuse offered freedom, to sport with their own fetters! Can a young man be too soon happy in Christ? For to be early in Christ is to be early blessed. Be assured that whatever may be the vain promises of the world, and the suggestions of our own evil hearts, the "ways of wisdom" are alone "ways of pleasantness," and her "paths" alone "paths of peace." "Godliness hath the promise both of the life that now is and of that which is to come." In the language of our church "to serve God is perfect freedom;" "His commands are not grievous, His yoke is easy and His burden light." Can you, then, too soon tread the "ways" which are "pleasantness" and the paths which are "peace?" Can you too soon secure "the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come?" Can you too soon forsake the "broken cisterns" which will "hold no water," and the ashes on which the worldling feeds, in order that you may slake your thirst in the "Fountain of living waters," and have in you a well-spring springing up into everlasting life? Can you too soon partake of the hidden manna, the bread of immortality, of which whosoever eateth shall hunger no more?

Surely it is an unspeakable privilege to be early in Christ! To be early in Him is to grow in grace as we grow in years; to be ripening for the harvest more and more, the nearer the harvest hour approaches. It is not noble or generous, it is not reasonable or fair, to offer that Saviour, who "gave His life for us," nothing but the withering and blighting of our years; to squander and desecrate in the service of the world and the devil, all the energy of our faculties, and all the warmth of our affections, and all the ardent desires of our childhood and our youth, and then to turn to God in the eleventh hour, rather driven by terror than attracted by love. But it is beautiful when, while the flower is in the bud, and the earliest blossoms are fragrant and fresh, and besprinkled with dew, our youth is laid upon His altar. It is beautiful to see any one not driven by terror, but drawn by love. God delights in such service. He declares—"I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me." And, then, from what darkened understandings and from what fearful transgressions will the being early in Christ deliver you! Many a heavy-headed penitent would tell you, if you questioned him, that he would give worlds, if he possessed them, to have served God from his youth upward. He can recall fearful misuses of talents and abuses of privilege, and many squanderings of golden opportunities; he can recall, perhaps, dark deeds of transgression which harrow his soul and oppress his spirit, when God makes him to "possess the sins of his youth;" and, more fearful still, he can recall the injurious influence which he exerted upon others, when he acted the betrayer's part, and by his evil example led the unwary into the broad road which leadeth to destruction; and now all his

attempts to reclaim them are vain, and he goes mourning to the grave, perhaps, because he did not seek his Saviour betimes.

Do not say—"Are we dogs, that we should do this?" So said Hazael till he was tempted. So may you say; but you know not to what dark crimes you may be driven. There is no security out of Christ. You know not what may befall you, or to what you may be driven, if Christ draw you not with His own right hand.

And, once more, my dear young friends, to be early in Christ is to have a good hope of a brighter and a loftier crown in the kingdom of your Father. Are you ambitious? Let your ambition soar on the wings of faith to a world alone worthy of the ambition of a deathless being like man. Be ambitious to be very holy, to be very like God your Saviour, to be very highly exalted in His kingdom; for though, as regards merit, you have no claim to anything but hell, yet as regards mercy, the more richly you sow, the more largely you shall reap; though the vessels of glory shall all be full to the extent of their capacity, yet their capacity differs widely, so that some are small and some are large. Be ambitious to be a vessel of large capacity, expanded in the knowledge and the love of God, and beautiful with His image traced upon you. There is a striking little poem of the sainted Herbert which puts this subject in a most touching point of view. May it also fix it on your memory. He describes a qualified strife in heaven and the subject of it is this: he represents two spirits to have just come from earth to heaven, one the spirit of a man who had been called to serve God in his early days, and had walked with Him all his life long; the other the spirit of a man who had neglected God for the greater part of his life, but was delivered at last even as "a brand plucked out of the burning." Full of ecstasy and adoration, they enter upon a holy contest as to who owes most to the sovereign grace which has brought them there. The angels are represented as gathering round and watching with interest the strange controversy. The later convert pleads, "Certainly to grace I am the greatest debtor; for I had provoked God so long; I had heaped iniquity upon iniquity, I had trampled upon His patience and long-suffering, and yet even in my hoary hairs He snatched me as a brand from the fire." "But" rejoins the convert who was called in early days, "surely, I owe most to mercy, for I was brought to know my Saviour whilst yet a child; His grace strengthened in me with my strength and grew with my stature, and He preserved me unspotted from the world; He made my faith like the 'bright shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;' He made me to walk in His favour during the whole of my earthly pilgrimage, and when at last I came to depart I had 'an abundant entrance ministered unto me,' into His everlasting kingdom." "The angels," adds the poet, "the angels, as with one voice, adjudged in favour of the early convert."

Dear young friends, if "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over the" hoary "sinner that repenteth," surely there must be seven-fold joy over the young transgressor who says, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." The Lord incline your hearts to make the purpose and resolve your own; may each one say for himself, "I will arise and go to my Father!"

Men and brethren, what a melancholy case is theirs, who, receiving unnumbered invitations and warnings and entreaties, have borne the Christian name

from childhood, till grey hairs are come upon them, and yet are not in Christ! What does all you see avail you? What do all your professions avail you? What does every thing you have attained in this life profit you? If you are not in Christ, "you are poor and blind and miserable and naked;" you have no true joy in this world and no hope with regard to the world to come. Out of Christ God is "a consuming fire;" in Christ alone He is a merciful and forgiving Father. Fly for mercy, therefore, while yet the door of the city of refuge stands wide open. "Escape for your lives, tarry not in all the plain." "Give no rest to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids," until you have found admission into Christ, and not only into Himself by name and by union with His visible church, but into Him by participation with His quickening Spirit, evident in newness of heart and in newness of life. Then, indeed, Christ will be in you and you will be in Christ, and all things therefore will be yours.

Beloved young brethren, once more let me entreat you in the name of God your Saviour, that you would not delay the matter. The shadows of evening will soon come, the morning will soon be past. Now, therefore, while it is called to-day, cry to your Father, 'Lord, I am thine, save Thou me; Thy vows are upon me, O my God, and those vows by the help of Thy grace I purpose to fulfil.' Some of you are about to renew them in the face of the congregation, and in the presence of God. Oh! that the Lord may give you hearts to dedicate yourselves without reserve and without hypocrisy to His service. Oh! that when the solemn question is asked, "Do you here in your own person ratify and renew the covenant and promise made for you in your baptism?" you may be able to reply, "I do!" May each one for himself, that it may be heard in heaven and recorded there, that this and that child was born in this church, and made a living partaker of Christ! and may God by His Holy Spirit abound in you more and more, till you come to His everlasting kingdom!

Christian brethren, how are children to be taught and trained as members of Christ, to be taught and trained so that the grafting may become effectual? For baptism does not act as a magic charm; it acts after a reasonable and a scriptural sort; and how can we expect that baptism should avail if we do not teach and train the baptized, so that they may know Christ to whom they have been consigned, understand the solemn obligations which they are under, and try to renounce what God has forbidden, to believe what God has taught, and to do what God has commanded? To bring up mortal immortals, fallen but redeemed, pledged to be Christ's, aright, we must "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and if we inseminate into their young hearts the good seed of eternal life, we may look for good fruit. If there were faith and fidelity on the part of the church, and on the part of all who train and teach the lamb's of Christ's flock, how much more should we see "our sons grow up as plants in their youth, and our daughters as polished stones," beautiful for holiness, and adorned with a meek and quiet spirit! Such is the education given to the children of the poor by the institution on whose behalf we plead with you this morning. It is a strictly scriptural education given under the wing of our own church, in conformity with her scripturally-tested forms and formularies of worship. Beloved brethren, it is the oldest charity of the kind in a metropolis rich in its benevolent institutions. It has instructed more than 1,200 young persons who have gone forth

to perform the duties of life, or have gone to their rest above, as generation after generation has departed. At the present moment it needs your special succour and aid; for it labours under embarrassment. Many who once supported it have by poverty or by death been withdrawn. Step in and supply their lack. Let there never be wanting a succession of Christian friends to a charity so time-honoured, so useful, so dear to any man, and above all to a religious man. The object of the institution is to train up females, and females make or mar society. They form the mothers of the future generation, and they must teach and train up children either in sin and iniquity, or in the peace of God and the love of Christ. The right education of the females of a nation is of the most vital moment, for upon it must largely depend the character, the prosperity, and the dignity of the land. Beloved brethren, let those who have obtained mercy show mercy. "Whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it in the name of the Lord," so that "being found in Him, not having on your own righteousness"—being complete in Him, you may be accepted of Him in that great day, when He will say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of My brethren, ye did it unto Me."

THE EXPOSTULATION OF THE NEGLECTED.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. JOSHUA FREDERICK DENHAM, M.A., F.R.S.,

Rector of St. Mary-le-Strand; Lecturer of St. Bride's, Fleet Street.

PREACHED IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH, MYDDELTON SQUARE,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the Lamb and Flag Ragged Schools.

"My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."—Song of Solomon i. 6.

THESE are words of sorrowful self-reproach, my brethren, whatever may be their primary meaning and reference; and the condition of those persons is little to be envied to whom they are applicable even by accommodation! Sad is the state of things when human beings individually or collectively are compelled on a retrospect of their conduct to charge themselves with a *misdirection of objects* in the exercise of their talents or the use of their means: and to confess that they have been taking care of others, and not of their "own," or of themselves!

It were a lamentable condition for a *temporal ruler* to find that he had been providing for the welfare of another country, and not of his own! Mournful were the mistake that a man should neglect his own *family* to take care of another's!

But the too possible application of the words in a *spiritual* sense is even more deplorable. Such, for instance, as if a *minister of religion* should at the close of his life feel convinced that while he had been urging others to pursue the salvation of their souls—he had neglected *his own*.

But these words afford also a very striking description of the mistake made by a *church*, or body of people, which should direct its efforts to the moral and spiritual welfare of distant nations and be grossly inattentive to that of its own members. Thus applied, the text suggests a fearful *picture* to our minds; in which the principal figure bears indeed a guardian aspect, but is bowed down in shame amid the reproofs of "children" who indignantly point to a distant "vineyard," the object of his mistaken care, and compared with which their "own" neglected vineyard presents a sad contrast;—and beneath this picture we seem to see the words written, "*My mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards:*" and I have attended to other vineyards, "*but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*"

And is not this a just cause for anger? Might not those children righteously complain that *they* stood nearest in relation, and ought to have also stood

first among the objects of his care, and that at least they did not *deserve* the egregious neglect which they charge upon their *natural protector*, and which he now confesses with unavailing sorrow; "mine own vineyard have I not kept."

My brethren, it is to be feared that *some*,—too many, resemblances of this scene are to be found in the records of private and public life. But I will not conceal the application of these words which I have in view, but will tell you at once, that the most fearful exemplification of the text is to be found where last of all it ought to exist, and might most reasonably have been expected not to exist—namely, in the *spirit of professed Christian philanthropy in the present age*, and in the proceedings of a large portion of the visible church of Christ.

I am compelled to accuse the supporters of some of our most popular religious societies of having grievously fulfilled the text, and of being sadly entitled to the self-condemnation it contains;—and I mean the supporters of *missions to the heathen*, who in their zeal for the promotion of the religious welfare of *distant countries* have overlooked the culture of their "own vineyard" at home: and in the allegory which is furnished by the text I behold the *genius of modern missions to the heathens*: her eye intently fixed on some far distant land—watching the arrival of a missionary ship, sent out at immense cost to the shores of some barbarous tribe: while around her crowds of miserable, yet kindred souls are looking up as from the region of departed spirits, with reproof, expostulation, and censure in their looks;—and beneath *this* picture the language of the text seems to burn and redden as the complaint appropriate to her own neglected countrymen:—"The children of my mother country are angry with me: they made me keeper of the vineyards: but mine own vineyard have I not kept." 'These poor children of my mother-land virtually by their *relation* to myself made me the keeper of their welfare, and I have neglected *them* to keep the vineyard of *distant strangers*.'

Such, my brethren, is the application I intend to make of this passage; and I am certain that no individual present will find reason to complain of it as unjust or uncharitable, when I mention that the income of the Church Missionary Society from this country alone was last year more than £90,000 for missions to the heathens, and that the Jubilee Fund up to this time amounts to more than £53,000, while the aggregate income of all the Ragged Schools for the conversion of our *native* baptized heathens at home, living in ignorance, vice, and impiety, has not been sufficient to keep any one of them out of a state of comparative bankruptcy: that the annual income of one of them is only £15; that at a public meeting in aid of another, which was in debt to the amount of £30, the *enormous* sum of £2 10s. was collected; and that the subscriptions to the Ragged Schools for which I plead this day, and which are situated in one of the most degraded localities of the metropolis, have not yet exceeded £90, after the most laborious exertions to obtain them: and that in this Christian metropolis there are but about seventy of these Ragged Schools, all of them depending on chance for their daily bread amid a population of *thirty thousands* of children, who, for the want of them, are living not only without the knowledge of God in the world, but in a condition of the most absolute vice and misery. For instance, within a radius of only five hundred yards from the Ragged Schools for which I plead, there are fifteen hundred children at this moment,—shoeless, filthy, depraved, and abandoned beyond your possible conception.

If such wretched children did but know their own privations and comprehend the neglect that has been shown them by professing Christians in this metropolis alone, to say nothing of the large manufacturing towns throughout the country—might they not justly exclaim with one voice against the cruelty of sending missionaries to distant lands, while so little has been done—nay, literally *nothing* has been *attempted* to be done for this vast class of our home population till within about the last five years: nothing done to rescue them from the present and future miseries of vice and ignorance of God? My brethren, you are all well aware that this state of things has been going on ever since we can any of us remember. You have all heard of missionary meetings, missionary sermons, missionary collections, private and public—but we have none of us heard of a Ragged School—that is, of a school adapted to the reception of the poorest and most degraded classes of children, till within a comparatively few years: and now our ears have hardly become accustomed to the name of such schools; we have scarcely perhaps become aware of the importance of them, we are scarcely able to believe in their success; and it is still one of the most difficult things in the world to awaken the attention to them of *professed Christian philanthropists*, while those who *have* begun to perceive how cruelly this immense class of children in our own metropolis and our large towns have been neglected, are only *astonished* how we should have ever overlooked our “own” flesh and blood—those of our “own” household—our “own” city—our “own” neighbourhood—our “own vineyard.”—while we have been advocating the cause of missions to the heathens:—and they are now only *beginning* to see that some such language as that of the text is too applicable to them and to their conduct, “The children of my *mother land* may be justly angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.”

In bewailing this most lamentable oversight, my brethren, let it not be understood that we grudge that the knowledge of the Gospel should be extended to heathen lands, or that we would discourage those who consider it to be the command of God to *them*, and consequently their *clear* and imperative duty to cooperate in that work. Still less would we wish to disparage the wisdom and discretion of the truly venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which, while providing the means of grace for our fellow-subjects abroad endeavours to gather those also of the heathen under British influence into the fold of Christ:—but we do plead for the duty as *foremost* in claim because highest in obligation, and because it has hitherto been most unaccountably neglected, of “taking care of our own”—of attempting to reclaim the tens of thousands of our heathen children at home, in our own metropolis, and diffused through our own neighbourhoods—who are literally “destroyed for lack of knowledge.” We affirm, upon the apostle St. Paul’s authority, that the religious world in neglecting their “own” and in “not providing for those of their own household” have been guilty of conduct, unthinkingly indeed, “worse than that of the infidel.” We plead, in a word, for the attempt to reclaim the multitude of wretched children of both sexes in this vast metropolis, who have not clothes to appear in the ordinary infant, parochial, and Sunday schools, and whom, for other reasons, we could not even admit into such schools; children who are born in misery and educated in crime:—and we ask, as the most reasonable of all duties, that by extending our benevolence to *them* we may remove the reproach—that we, who by our

position in society, are made the keepers of vineyards,—have not kept “our own vineyard.” We beg of you, my brethren, that while you give money to extend the means of Christian instruction to *heathen* lands you would not utterly pass over the perishing children in your own neighbourhood; and we entreat those who think with us, that it is the first of all duties “to take care of our own vineyard,” to give liberally this day to the promotion of this undertaking.

And this duty we rest upon certain *particular* considerations, also, which we now proceed to state and apply. In the first place, *it is a notorious fact, that in almost every neighbourhood and parish of this metropolis there is a vast number of children, constituting the very dregs of the population, who are immersed in the lowest depths of ignorance, misery, and crime; and that this part of the population is increasing at a tremendous ratio every day.*

If any man wished to see *religious ignorance* and its *results* in their *extremes*, he has no need to travel to any country beyond his own, or to visit any neighbourhood beyond that in which he resides, in almost any portion of this immense capital. In the outskirts of our new neighbourhoods, and in almost every old and densely populated parish of the metropolis, he may find localities which a regard even to his own reputation may absolutely forbid him to enter. Let him, for instance, descend into the streets, lanes, alleys, courts and yards, comprising that centre of filth and sin, which is the immediate sphere of the Ragged Schools for which I plead, and when he has beheld the savagism, the degradation, the dirt, the demonism of those localities—more offensive to the mind than is the stench of their atmosphere to the senses: let him put to his own heart this solemn question, ‘Shall I be doing right in giving what I have to spare to missions to the Heathens, and in withholding my aid from “a vineyard” which God and nature have made so peculiarly “my own?”’ Let such a person consider, in the next place, that *this* may be essentially called our “own” vineyard, because it is so *easily accessible*. One great rule of doing good, is to adopt the *readiest* and *nearest* sphere of benevolence, and when we have done “whatsoever our hand findeth to do” in *that*—then to look abroad in search of other objects. Now, only consider, my brethren, whether it is right in us to pass over a sphere of immense, most legitimate and undoubted usefulness lying at your own doors, in order to send out missionaries on long voyages to distant lands, who have to learn foreign languages, and almost as soon as they are tolerably fit for their employment are overtaken by death, or who have to learn those languages in missionary colleges, and who, after years of study, speak and write them most imperfectly; whereas, you may, any of you, get to the Ragged Schools in Lamb Court in ten minutes’ walk,—every child in that neighbourhood speaks our mother tongue, and if we had but sufficient funds we could set more Ragged Schools in action in a week’s time, and teach order, duty and piety to hundreds and thousands more of the children of our mother country.

Consider, in the next place, the *difference of the expence*; and this is always worth considering in a world in which nothing can be done without money. Now only consider the outfit of a single missionary and his family to a heathen country, and the payment of his salary, or the expense of his maintenance there, and that the amount of good he is able to achieve is slow and scanty indeed:—and consider that for the same sum we could maintain a Ragged School at home, comprehending hundreds of the children of our mother

country, and with the comparative *certainty of success*—and you will not fail to perceive, I think, *where* your proper sphere of duty lies.

Consider in the next place, *the difference of the result*. The success of missions in heathen lands is well known to those who engage in them to be slow and precarious to the extreme. Missionaries can have access only to the lowest and most needy part of the population; and this is only reasonably to be expected. For who amongst you in respectable life would even listen to a stranger endeavouring to persuade you and your families to forsake your religion, and who brought no miraculous credentials with him? Of these *needy* people the missionary may make converts; but then he must also *maintain* them, for when he ceases to do so they will almost inevitably relapse into heathenism. The case is very like that of the generality of conversions from Judaism in this country. Accordingly, it has long ago been found in the experience of missions to the heathens, that almost the only means of success consists of *schools* for the young. In proof of this assertion, I will read to you part of a letter from Ceylon, which appears in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* of only last month, and I will read it from the number itself of that publication. The letter was addressed to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, by the Bishop of Colombo, shortly after the visit of the Bishop of Calcutta to Ceylon, in January last. After describing a meeting of the native *schools* around Colombo, the following words occur: “*Every* conviction is, that in a *heathen* country, the *school* is the *real* field for *hopeful* missionary work *Sure* I am that *no* aggressive movement on the great amount of merely nominal Christianity, or apathetic infidelity, or blinded, but not bigotted superstition of the native mind will ever be made, *except through the education of the young*.” Hence, then, my brethren, the only question is—whether it be your duty and mine to maintain *schools* for the children of *heathen* lands, and to *entirely*, at least, pass over *schools* for the education of a class of children, who are in a worse than heathen state *in our own country*? At home, too, we have not only fewer impediments, but we have the *certainty of success*. I can personally certify to you, my brethren, that it is possible even in the centre of this metropolis—in the very heart of the *Strand*, to banish the abodes of evil from a *whole parish*, and by the aid of Parochial, Sunday and Infant schools, to diminish the annual number of committals for juvenile delinquency from *many* in a year to almost *none*. We have also facts nearer at hand, facts to adduce connected with these ragged schools: namely, that out of nearly 1,000 children who have shared the benefit of these Lamb and Flag Schools only two have so far relapsed, or fallen into vice, as to incur the displeasure of the laws; whereas, before these schools were instituted, the very house in which they are held was called “the warren,” from its being a well-known resort for teaching *the art of thieving*, it having been ascertained that the sweeps who kept that house, trained boys there to descend chimnies in order to commit robberies. I further add, that the reverend ordinary of Newgate, in his last report, distinctly attributes the marked diminution in the conviction of juvenile offenders to the influence of Ragged Schools.

My brethren, who amongst us does not wish that we had only found out this mode of doing good long ago, and that a tithe only of the money which has been expended in missions to the heathens, had been devoted to the care of our poor heathen children at home? Instead of which, many a man has been mourning over the condition of the heathen world, attending crowded

meetings, listening to impassioned speeches, and giving largely to appeals made on such occasions;—and as he went out of his house to attend them, has actually passed by police offices, and prisons teeming with juvenile offenders, and never had the good sense or sound charity to say—‘Am I not, by my attentions to the heathen, neglecting the children of my mother country?’ And other men went to attend meetings for the abolition of slavery, and never considered, that day after day, their own countrymen were being drifted off to penal settlements, and that every Monday, as sure as it came, several miserable wretches were strangled at Newgate, for forging, or tendering a forged, one pound Bank of England note; and that the rise and origin of these shameful things was, the neglect of “the children of their mother” country, and that while keeping “the vineyard of others, their own vineyard they did not keep.” Yes, my brethren, to our shame be it spoken, clergymen were preaching about missions, and people were making speeches, and writing poems, about slavery, and not a man of us, till within about the last five years of this year, 1849, and in this Christian metropolis, had the sense or healthy philanthropy “to consider in his heart, and to say,”—‘What are we doing? We are taking care of people on the other side of the globe, in countries we hardly ever heard of before, whose place, even upon the map, we could not all of us readily point out; and we are neglecting “the children of our mother” land—those thousands and tens of thousands of poor wretched boys born to thievery, and those poor girls, whose only inheritance is pollution.’ No! and even *now*, within a year, nearly £150,000 are collected for heathens by one missionary society alone, and not as many sixpences for the Ragged Schools: and there is no way left to arouse the attention of the religious world to the inconsistency, but by some such straightforward denunciation of it as shall incur their displeasure! My brethren, these are the things which make men of the world and the philosopher look down upon us with proper pity, and deserved contempt. ‘Here,’ they say, ‘are men professing to believe in the infinite value of human souls, passing by the wretched children of their own locality, without a sixpence to their aid, and giving nearly £150,000 in a year for the conversion of people at the antipodes. Here are people moved at the sight of New Zealand clubs, spears, warcloaks, or idols from the South Seas, or especially at the sight of some *native* exhibited at a missionary meeting, and yet can view with indifference the wretched, half-naked, filthy, miserable children of their own metropolis, dragged off every day by the police; and in the superabundance of their philanthropy, never making a single effort for their rescue from present and future woe. What is all this but weakness of mind, folly, the love of excitement, and mere sickly sentimentality? What is this but the case of a man catering for the good of other people’s children, and neglecting his own?’ Thus say the men of the world, my brethren; and we must confess that the accusation is just. We cannot repel the dart they thus hurl at us. It transfixes our souls with conviction; and we acknowledge that we are “verily guilty” concerning “the children of our mother” land: in that they made us, by their relation to ourselves, “keepers of vineyards,” and “our own vineyard we have not kept.”

Would to God, my brethren, that the spirit of the text were not so largely applicable to us as it is. Oh! that we had all of us more fully kept the vineyard of our “own” hearts, of our “own” families, then of our “own” neighbourhoods, and of our “own” parishes! Then, indeed, after we had placed “our own”

vineyards in a proper state of cultivation, we might have justifiably extended our care to the vineyard of others ; but to go out of it, or beyond it, while it was overgrown with "weeds of bitterness," the lurking place of so many "hateful birds," and of "all doleful creatures," and defaced by so many blighted trees, betokens a want of common sense, and a morbid sensibility, which discredit our character as Christians, and even as rational beings.

My brethren, I never preached a sermon with more heart-felt pleasure than this to day, because I have the firmest ground to go upon ; because I am telling you the truth ; because I am uttering the long cherished convictions of my own soul—and which are confirmed by the letter from India, and the other facts which I have brought before you ; and because I have been assured by your indefatigable secretary, that these views coincide with those of the most active and influential gentlemen of this parish, present on this occasion, and whose judgment, as the heads of a parish like Clerkenwell, is, in a practical question of this kind, entitled to the highest consideration. I rejoice to know, my brethren, that *you* believe that these Ragged Schools are some of the most needed, most rational, most scriptural means of doing good—real, lasting, domestic, and religious good : and, I may add, the most effective means of national security also ; for I need not tell you that they are directed to the instruction of a class of the people of all others to be dreaded in any public commotion—as recent events on the continent clearly show,—and, as I believe, events will shortly show, even in this country, if these classes are left much longer without the means of subsistence and religious cultivation.

My brethren, let us beware lest we witness in this country the righteous retribution of Heaven, afforded by a state overturned by the neglected classes of its subjects : and have ultimately bitter reason to say, "The children of my mother land are angry with me ; they made me keeper of the vineyards ; but mine *own* vineyard have I not kept." On the contrary, let us avoid this self reproach now, and at the day of judgment, when our own individual share in the cause of it will be "sure to find us out." Let us apply our charity to the care of "the children of our mother land ;" and especially to the poor lost children contemplated by Ragged Schools—born in beggary—cradled in misery—nourished in crime :—and this within sight of "our own" abodes, and dwelling in localities which you pass every day, to and from your engagements. And ye, young men, whose hearts glow with enterprise and the love of your native land—let me appeal to you to engage in this most obvious, most easy and effective means of doing good. Try to cultivate that "vineyard" in the locality I have named ; and I, who despise all romance, and especially romance in religious matters, can confidently assure you, that you shall soon be repaid by seeing that locality exhibit a yet more pleasing change than it has already undergone under the influence of these Ragged Schools ; and which you now behold in the wholesome appearance of those children, who once were ragged, verminous, and filthy. Be assured that you shall find these children more tractable than you might imagine. They have no self-righteous pride to be mortified : no *caste* or character to lose : no worldly feelings to overcome. They know their wretchedness : they have a heart still, and perhaps not quite so hard and hopeless as that of the Pharisee.

And ye, Christian females, whose visits to those Schools we cannot too earnestly entreat, help us this day by your contributions to snatch a brother or a sister from shame and woe. And you, Christian fathers and mothers

while you look on your children beside you, and contrast their condition with that of the children for whom I plead, let your thankfulness to "that God who has caused them to *differ*," prompt an offering of gratitude and duty. And ye, my brethren, collectively—*every one* within hearing of the text—beware of its accomplishment in yourselves in the great day of account! Beware, lest "the children of your mother" land then rise up "in anger" against you, and you fall under the self condemnation, "they made me keeper of vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

But no—let us think of and procure for ourselves a brighter scene. Let us consider, that if we can but present *one* recovered soul to God, how acceptable a present it will be to that Saviour, to whom it was the counsel of His Father's love, and the exercise and consummation of His own, "to bring many sons unto glory." Let us imitate the condescension of our Redeemer, who came to seek and to save the lost," and "to minister" to the lowest of all the fallen orders of being; who "took not hold of angels, but took hold of the seed of Abraham," and who prescribed it as the test of our discipleship, and as the condition of His merciful favour, that we should love one another as He loved us. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

PREACHED IN BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 20, 1849.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

WHATEVER gifts God may bestow of an intellectual kind upon His servants here on earth, they must very speedily pass away, as they are now very limited also in their operation; and whatever providential blessings God bestows upon His children in this world, so the possession of them must very soon be resigned. There is nothing which so often forces itself on their conviction, although they resist the moral influence of that conviction, than the exceeding uncertainty and transitoriness of these gifts. The apostle Paul in addressing the Corinthians, who too much exulted in the spiritual gifts which they had thus received after their profession of faith in Christ, called them in this chapter to attend to that fact—that however much they valued those endowments, they would very soon fail. "Whether there be prophecies," you read in the eighth verse—that is, gifts of prophecies, as you read in the second verse—"though I have prophecy"—that is, the gift of prophecy—"if I have not charity, I am nothing;"—"Whether there be prophecies"—that is, gifts of prophecies—"they shall fail; whether there be tongues"—that is, gifts of tongues—"they shall cease; and whether there be knowledge" of any kind, "it shall vanish away"—it is so imperfect as it is enjoyed here below. The same may be said of all earthly blessings and privileges whatsoever: they are all exceedingly shortlived, as well as exceedingly imperfect—not adapted to the human mind, not capable of providing for our eternal condition. But in contradistinction to this, "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Whatever is partial, as all these gifts are, must cease; but—in contradiction to their transitory condition, "*but now*," as it ought to be, "*but now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*"

The apostle says, that while other gifts pass, faith, hope, and charity abide. The expression "*now*" is not meant to represent the duration of these graces, but it is merely an expression of contrast to the transitoriness of all other gifts. "*But now*," as if he said, "but on the contrary," "faith, hope, and charity abide;" and you may very often see in the Scriptures, in St. Paul's writings especially, many like passages. If you look, for instance, at the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and the nineteenth verse—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable; but now is Christ risen from the dead;" on the contrary, notwithstanding the opposite supposition that was sometimes made, "*but now*, is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them which sleep." So the apostle here states, in opposition to the transitoriness of these gifts, that "*faith, hope, and charity abide.*"

The passage therefore leads us obviously to consider these three points—first, what these three possessions, faith, hope and charity, are; secondly, in what sense these three possessions abide, in opposition to those intellectual or other gifts—"now *abideth* faith, hope and charity, these three;" and thirdly, why charity is the greatest of the three. These are the three points which will combine and comprehend a few remarks, that I have to make upon this subject. "Now *abideth* faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

I. By the "*faith*" of which the apostle speaks here, he intends faith in its highest and saving exercise—faith in Christ to God. In its general accepta-

tion faith means simply belief. The belief in anything that is spoken is faith in the statement that is made; but the belief in anything spoken by a person includes faith in the person, whenever that which he states is a promise. I cannot believe in the promise which any one makes to me, without trusting in the person whose promise I so believe. And therefore faith means, in the New Testament, simply trust. It is founded on an implicit belief and acceptance of what God has said; and since He has given various great promises, belief is trust.

The apostle here speaks of a trust in God through Christ—a trust in God as our heavenly Father through Him: that is, a being able to confide in His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His veracity, His fidelity to His people, His sympathy and kindness and care, in His providence and in His grace. It is an unbounded, universal trust in God as our God. And it is a trust in God through Christ that the apostle is speaking of: that is, a trust in the mediation and merit of Christ—a trust in Him as that atoning sacrifice through which a sinner can be thus accepted by God. It is also a trust in Him as our all-prevailing and most gracious Intercessor—that He will secure to us those blessings which He has merited by His life and death. It is therefore, further, a trust in God the Holy Spirit, who being given to believers for the sake of Christ, accomplishes their whole salvation, and makes them “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is a trust in Him through Christ, to enlighten, to comfort, to sanctify, to preserve to the end, and thus bring us to heavenly glory for the sake of the Redeemer. The man who has faith in God trusts in Him for the accomplishment of all this through Christ; and if we do not do this, we have not saving faith in Him. That is the essence of faith; because God has said it, and Christ has merited it, and the Holy Spirit can do it, and will do it, and it is all promised to us, therefore simple belief of what God has said, implies that we trust in Him to do all this for us. We trust in God our heavenly Father, with all His heavenly perfections, to save us from all evil and bring us to all good; we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, as our atonement and Intercessor, as our great and good High Priest, to accomplish all His work for us, and to secure for us His own blessed Spirit, to make us “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” That is “faith.”

The “hope” of which the apostle speaks in this passage is likewise a very definite thing. It is not an uncertain expectation of some good; it is not merely a persuasion that in future there remains something better for us than we now enjoy—which is in itself a comforting and consolatory feeling; but it is a definite expectation of at last receiving the blessings promised by God. While faith is trust in Him to accomplish what He has promised, hope, which springs from faith and is closely connected with faith, is an expectation of the blessings themselves that God has thus promised in Christ. It is an expectation, therefore, of more grace, of more knowledge, of more happiness, and peace in believing—the expectation of safety as long as we live, and of acceptance by God when we die; it is an expectation of rising to a better state—to be with our Saviour for ever and to be like Him; it is the expectation of all the happiness promised in the Word of God to all who are believers in Christ—the hope of being eternally and completely happy, as the result of our short trial and conflict here on earth. That is the “hope” spoken of in this passage.

And then the apostle speaks of a third Christian grace—and that is “charity;” that is, not love to God only, nor love to man alone, but love to God and to Christ and for saints, for the sake of Christ. It is a love to God, because He has redeemed and saved us through His dear Son—feeling our hearts drawn from Him no longer, no longer dreading Him, no longer being alienated from Him, but feeling that we are attracted to the Divine Being; a love of gratitude to Him, for having so marvellously saved us, and a love of complacency in Him, delighting in those great perfections which He has thus illustrated and glorified. It is a love, therefore, which leads us to love all that He is, all that He does and all that He says—to love His promises and to love His precepts—to love His law, to love His ordinances, to love His people for His sake. It is a love especially to Christ, who has “borne our sins in His own body on the tree”—a feeling of great admiration for all that the Lord Jesus has done for us and for all that He has manifested Himself to be to us—a feeling that our hearts are attracted to that incomparable Saviour, that we love to think of His goodness, as well as of His greatness—a feeling of pleasure in the prospect of being for ever with Him, seeing Him face to face, and holding uninterrupted and perfect communion with our Lord, when perfect in body and in soul, we shall at length be worthy of Him who has thus died to rescue us. It thence follows, that love to saints is implied in this “charity:” to love His

people for His sake, because the Lord Jesus Christ loves them, because they are the only people on earth that love Him our best friend, because they have, in some measure at least, a resemblance to Him—some portion of His own perfections; a love to them because they are the friends of truth, because they are maintaining all that is good upon earth, and are combined in battle against all that is evil—because they are brethren for eternity as well as time, and so feeling that our hearts are attracted to them as they are attracted to the Redeemer. This, briefly, is the character of the “charity” that the apostle speaks of here; and these three things are found in the Christian—they are his possessions—namely, “faith, hope and charity.”

II. Let us now consider what the apostle means by these things “abiding.” “Now abideth faith, hope, charity.”

Since the word “now” does not designate the time that they abide, but is merely put in contrast with the other things that are stated in the eighth and tenth verses, to pass away, therefore the word “abideth” is not necessarily confined to this life. The apostle does not mean merely that these things abide as long as we live, but he means something more, for since those other things might abide as long as we live, and did abide with some people as long as they lived, therefore the contrast in the thirteenth verse, which forms our text, cannot merely state that “faith, hope, and charity, abide” in this life, as it is sometimes interpreted: since prophecies failed, when the person who had the prophetic gift died—since tongues ceased, when he who spake the tongue was silent in the grave—and knowledge vanisheth away, not in this world, but as soon as this world is passed, because it is so partial; therefore, when the apostle, in contradistinction to these things which last through life says, “Faith, hope, charity abide,” it shows us that the duration of which he speaks is a duration after this life, is a duration in eternity. The statement, then, is this—“faith, hope, charity, abide” in the heavenly world, when all those gifts which men possess and too highly value, and those providential favours which they are so apt to make their idols, have passed away.

Now first let us notice, that since faith, hope and charity abide in the Christian, therefore they must first be there. It is a characteristic of a child of God and a disciple of Christ that he has these possessions of “faith, hope and charity,” in the sense which I have described. So that if any one among us does not possess these gifts, we are but “as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal;” we may have the profession of religion, but not the reality. This is what God gives to His children—“faith, hope and charity;” He makes them trust Him, instead of disbelieving Him—hope for His heavenly blessing, instead of doubt and terror, and therefore love Him, and love the Saviour, and love His people. If we do so, we have “faith, hope, and charity,” and we are followers of Christ; but if with all other gifts we have not “faith,” and we have not “hope,” and we have not “charity,” we must know ourselves to be no disciples of Jesus Christ. We need not be mistaken. Do we exercise faith, hope and charity? If we do, then the Lord has changed our hearts, then He has drawn us to His Son, then He has put upon us the mark of His children, then we shall have eternal life; but if not, let us not be deceived—if we are without these great possessions, compared with which all other distinctions are trivial and vain, do not let us deceive ourselves—we may be very zealous, very diligent, very enlightened, very fluent about the truth, yet we are not the followers of Jesus Christ. But if God has given us these things, and those who were unbelieving trust, and those who limited their thoughts to this world live by “hope,” and those who were “enemies to God by wicked works” love Him, and those who were alienated from the saints of God love them, then we are the disciples of Jesus Christ, and He will not disown us when He comes again.

These things, then, my brethren, are said to “abide” in the believer; and, blessed truth! they abide in him as long as he lives. A man may lose his fortune, he may be deprived of his intellect even; but “faith, hope and charity” abide in the believer, when they are once formed. Rooted by the blessing of God there, they are destined to bloom on for ever, and they live as long as they last in this world. There are many things that may weaken their life, many things that may suspend their exercise, and those of the children of God who are not careful in their walk may lose the comfort of them and they may be exceedingly enfeebled in their exercise; but God, who put them in the heart of a sinner, keeps them there—God, who by His own sovereign goodness makes a man to believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him, means that he shall believe in Him, and hope in Him, and

love Him for ever; He whose sovereign goodness took him out from a world that is unbelieving, without "faith," without "hope" and without love, and formed this "faith, hope and love" in the sinner's heart, thus making him His child, He keeps that sacred treasure which He has given, lets no one rob him of it, and means to make that treasure his for ever. It abides in the Christian. Wherever "faith, hope and love" exist, they abide. Temptations and difficulties in vain assault them; nay, by the goodness of God, "all things work together for good to them that love God;" so that everything merely external may, if the Christian is watchful, be subservient to the further improvement of these precious graces, "faith, hope and love."

But as they abide thus in the Christian character, so they abide in the Christian church; as they existed in the first church that was ever gathered together, and signally shone forth through the power of grace in the church of the saints that were gathered together at Jerusalem; and from that day to this it has been the characteristic of a Christian church, that faith, hope, and love have been flourishing there; not always, unhappily, in the same degree, not always growing in the churches of Christ, but always there; and nothing more marks the churches of Christ from the world at large than this—that the whole community is inspired by faith, hope and charity. I wish we could see them so resplendent in each believer that we could hear, as it were, a voice from God to His whole people—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Oh! that we could see every Christian having, and feel ourselves to have, faith, hope and love in such abundant degrees and in such lively exercise, that the world might see each believer carrying about him proofs that he is a child of God, proofs of his heavenly origin and of his glorious destiny, that he might be manifestly a child of God, moving about in this evil world. But though, alas! we are exceedingly imperfect and have rather to mourn over our defects than exult in our attainments, yet still, after every deduction is made, this remains true, that faith, hope, and love are the possession of the whole church of God throughout the world. Every individual, be he literate or unlearned, be he rich or poor, be he weak or advanced in religion, be he of one church or of another church, all those who belong to Jesus Christ are marked by faith, hope, and love. And it is a glorious characteristic belonging to the church of God; it has already marked it off from the world as separate, and they may well know that they have a separate end, because they have so distinct a beginning. Their course is entirely different from the course of the world, and the result will be at length that they are separated in that world of glory, where not one will be missing that had these graces, and not one can be found that had them not.

As these abide, then, in the Christian church, they are the church's armour, they are the church's weapons of warfare, they are the church's certain pledge of victory. As sure as the church of God exercises faith, hope and charity, and the world exercises them not, they have that which must secure their ultimate triumph over mankind. The time may be long, but as sure as God's children have these graces, and none else, so sure have they the mark of the King upon them; they are God's servants, God's subjects, God's soldiers, God's children; they will reap God's harvest, and they will gather God's victory.

But as they thus give glory to the Lord, because He has given these graces even to the feeblest and the most faulty among them, so on the other hand, lastly, "faith, hope, and charity abide" in eternity. It is very true, my brethren, there is a sense in which the common expression that "faith is lost in vision" is perfectly true. We now live by faith, not by sight; and the time is coming when we shall live by sight. We shall see our own Saviour face to face; and therefore, in fact, as faith relates to that ultimate happiness, faith will be lost in sight and terminated, because we shall be with our Saviour face to face, through His incomparable goodness to us. But at the same time it is obvious that there will be a growing development for faith for ever. Suppose God were to call any one of us to His presence—it may be next week—we know not how soon; and we pass from this world and are in the presence of the Lord. We have entered then on eternity—we have entered on an irreversible condition. And we have such promises as these in abundance—not given us only to cheer us now, but given us to meet us on the heavenly shore; such promises, for instance, as at the close of the book of Revelation, the twenty-first chapter, and fourth verse: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away." Add to this the expression in the third verse of the twenty-second chapter—"There

shall be no more curse"—not in all eternity; and add such expressions as these—"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out." Why will the saints in glory never fall away, as Adam and Eve fell, when they were perfect—as angels fell strangely from their high estate, who once loved God and were loved by Him? Why, when we reach heaven, will our happiness be irreversible and growing for ever? Just because God has said it; and inasmuch as it rests on God's promise there is no occasion for doubt, and we must trust Him that we shall be happy in eternity. How easy will it be to trust Him then! It may be difficult now, when we have so many faults and the world is so full of evil; but there will be no difficulty then, when we find that we are made like Christ, and know Him, and know our Father's love, and enter on the possession of eternal joy. We shall then find it no more impossible to doubt than the prodigal, when his father fell upon his neck and put his arms round him, and kissed him, and welcomed him as his son. We cannot doubt then; we shall not be able to distrust our God when once we reach eternal happiness, but faith will then abide.

On the other hand, with respect to hope, it is very true that hope will issue in enjoyment ere long, and the apostle speaks of that, when in the eighth chapter to the Romans, and the twenty-fourth verse, he uses these terms: "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" We cannot hope for the possession of heaven, because we shall see it; we cannot hope for the resurrection, because the resurrection shall be enjoyed—we shall have the bodies of the resurrection; we cannot hope for any of those things which here below cheered us in our earthly course; but there is much obviously, in eternity, for which we can hope. There is an unexplored universe to expatiate over; there are new degrees of grace and of goodness to be still attained, even by the most advanced. It seems to be probable that the whole universe of God's sinless creatures will every moment be advancing in intelligence, in goodness and in joy. And if that be so, then we shall have reason to hope on for this as long as eternity lasts; and as faith will abide, so hope will abide too, when all earthly distinctions and gifts have passed away.

Thus also charity must abide then; for if even here below, when encompassed by infirmity, we have a little love to God, how shall we love Him when we are experiencing all the happiness of His renovated people! If we love Christ now, because He hung on the cross to save us, how shall we love Him then, when we see Him face to face—when we see our incomparable Saviour, and looking round upon the happiness of a ransomed world shall be able to say, 'Christ did it all; that King in His glory accomplished it all for us! We were all once on the brink of perdition; we were all vile and miserable enough once; that great Saviour on His throne has, by His humiliation unto death, rescued our souls and made them happy.' We shall love Him then; and when at length our faults are removed—those faults which so sever the children of God from one another in this world, and not a fault remains, nay, not a suspicion of the possibility of a fault, in all eternity, in any one—when each, conscious that himself is perfect and that all evil is removed for ever, will look round on the myriads of heaven and see that his brethren are as perfect as himself—then he must love the saints of God in a far higher and better degree than he ever loved them here on earth. And so if faith and hope abide, love will abide also to all eternity with those who have attained its possession here. Other possessions pass—they are not worthy to excite much solicitude while they remain, or occasion much regret when they are lost, because they are only the accommodations for the way, and they must all be resigned at death. But these possessions are as enduring as the immortal soul, and therefore worthy the immortal soul upon which God bestows them.

III. But let us, in the last place, ask why charity is "the greatest" of these three enduring possessions.

Faith, my beloved brethren, is very great; it is a wonderful attainment, faith. Let me only remind you of some of the expressions in the Word of God respecting it, which would each be worth your separate and prolonged regard, but to which I can only just advert in passing. Faith is that whereby all our sins are blotted out; the burden falls off the sinner's shoulder, when it was pressing him beneath the grave, at once. Let him get faith, and he is a forgiven sinner, he is an accepted and adopted child, and becomes an heir of glory. It is a wonderful exercise, that of faith. If any of you, my brethren, that have not believed in the Saviour should exercise faith at this time, your souls will be accepted through it. As sure as God lives, we have only to exercise faith,

and we are pardoned—we have only to trust, and we are forgiven—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." There is nothing else required. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and as God is true, all these things are fulfilled. Let a man exercise trust in the Saviour—trust in Him for pardon, for holiness, for perseverance—trust in Him for the favour of God, and the aid of the Spirit, and successful wrestling with sin, and at length preparation for heaven—trust in Him not for a part of what He has promised, but for all—trust in Him to save the soul in His own way and in no other way—and the moment any one attains that faith, he is a pardoned and accepted soul; and then that faith "purifies his heart," as the apostle Peter says. Let a man only get this faith into his heart, and that moment there is a strength supplied to him which enables him to wrestle successfully with evil, and motives are poured into his soul, which constrain him to holy obedience. This faith works within us by love, prompts to the highest gratitude to the Redeemer, and then makes the soul try to please Him. Faith which purifies the heart prompts to obedience. What obedience has faith rendered—what obedience is faith not able to render now! Look at that remarkable instance of devotedness to the will of God which we read this morning. What prompted it? Why, faith: "Abraham, when he was tried, offered up his son Isaac." What puerility, what absolute folly for men to suppose that faith is opposed to action! Faith is the source of action, the mainspring of obedience—that which conquers all selfishness and fear, and entertains thought, and prompts men to do what nothing else can prompt them to do. By faith Abraham offered up Isaac, by faith Noah built his ark, by faith Moses turned his back on the world, by faith the saints of God have triumphed. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." And therefore, says the apostle, faith saves us: "By grace are ye saved, through faith." So that no one can exaggerate the value or the greatness of this principle of faith. How, then, can love be greater than faith? See that which meets us when we are ruined, and never leaves us till we are glorified, and say if anything whatever can be greater than this faith in Christ. "Now abideth faith"—an enduring possession, worth all the possessions of the world.

At the same time hope is a precious possession and abides. "Now abideth hope;" and hope is a great gift of God. Of hope no less than of faith—hope which is closely connected with faith and springeth from faith—is it likewise said that "it saveth us." How energetic that expression of the apostle! Imagine that hope were gone—which of us would have courage to go on in the Christian life? We should say with the apostle, and we should faint while we said it—"If in this world only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." I know not whether in a state of society like ours it is true to the extent that it was true of the apostle Paul, in a time of great affliction; but still there is some truth in it, even now—that religion may expose the children of God to many trials, and that if they have no hope to sustain them, they would often be dejected and sorrowful; but let this hope cheer our hearts—the assurance that after a little more patience, and a little more effort, and a little more self-denial, we shall have all that our hearts can wish, a noble, pure and lasting happiness; and does not this shed a lustre upon all the way along which we travel? It is in the possession of this hope that the Christian life, corresponds with the saying of the wise man, "the path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" whereas "the path of the wicked is as darkness, and they know not at what they stumble." In any moment the wicked may be precipitated into ruin; but the justified man enjoys more and more of the sunshine of the Divine favour, walks under an unclouded sky, knows where he is going, and as he approaches the eternal world catches glimpses of the happiness that is reserved for the people of God, which may well cheer him in all the course which he has yet to tread.

If, then, hope which saves, hope which purifies the soul, according to that statement of the apostle John, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure;"—if this hope is so great a thing, then let me ask, why is love the greatest of them all? A moment's consideration will show you that it is by far the greatest; not because love endures when faith and hope have ceased, for faith and hope abide as well as love—all three are cardinal graces of the Christian character, all three are similarly the gift of the same Holy Spirit, all three are necessarily connected with salvation, all three have exercised a most important influence

upon our character and upon our happiness, and therefore thus far are alike; but love is incomparably, after all, the greatest of these three enduring possessions. I will only mention one or two obvious considerations, which will at once set this truth clearly before your minds.

In the first place, what would faith and hope be without love? They are meant to bring us to love God. It was our nature to love God; and until we are taught to love Him we are in an alienated and corrupt state. He gives us faith and hope that we may love Him; and if we could have faith and hope without love, we should be without that which is the ground of faith and hope, and for which they were given. It is equally plain, that if faith and hope lead to love, love strengthens faith and hope. If you love God, how can you distrust Him? There is no fear in love; "perfect love casteth out fear." If you get love to God, then faith is secure. Love Him and you must trust Him; He is worthy of love, He is worthy of trust. God has done that to us sinners which must make us trust Him, and it is only because our hearts are alienated that we fail to trust Him. But when we get love in our hearts, and when we feel our hearts recovered to Him, then it is as easy as it is sweet to exercise unbounded confidence in Him who is so mighty, so wise, so good, and so true.

But again, there is this great peculiarity in love. Both faith and hope and charity give glory to God, but their main and direct effect is to obtain glory for ourselves. We trust in Him to bless us; we hope that He will bless us; we hope for the blessings which He promises. Faith and hope directly terminate in self. Does love do so? On the contrary, it is the very characteristic of love to give rather than to gain. When we feel that we love God, we want to honour God, we want to praise God, we want to live for His glory, we want to obey Him, we want to give to our God instead of gaining from Him. Faith and hope gain, but love gives, and therefore, as it is "more blessed to give than to receive," love is a higher grace than faith and hope, inasmuch as it is higher to give back to the King of the universe what He gives to us than it is to receive from His abundant blessings. Besides which, love gains more than faith and hope, though love's great element is giving. If we love God we rejoice in serving Him, but if we love God we gain from Him more happiness than faith and hope can give. If we love Him, my brethren, every blessing comes all the sweeter because it comes from His hand. Believe Him, that will make you hope; hope in Him that will cheer your hearts; but love Him, and then every blessing that comes from His great and gracious hand is so sweet as to fill your hearts with joy; and the more you evidence faith and hope in Him, the more you look forward to that world of blessings which He is preparing for you. Add love to faith and hope, and your happiness becomes complete.

Besides which, let us now notice this one peculiarity of love, and you will see its superiority to all else. God has not faith, God cannot hope, but "God is love;" and therefore when, in application to faith and hope, we get love, we become like God. For this He made us; it is the end of our immortal and rational existence. The exercise of our understandings in some measure conforms us to God, as it distinguishes us from the irrational creation, but we most resemble God when, like Him, we are loving. Love is too much underrated in this world. It is, in fact, higher than intellect, it is higher than fortitude, it is higher than external advantages; it conforms us to God. How glorious and godlike it is to love! If any one here is conscious that he loves God and his fellow-creatures, wishes to diffuse happiness around, and delights in benevolence, that person is conscious of some resemblance to his Father in heaven. This is what we had lost when we were slaves; it is what we have recovered now. We have learnt to love God, and, through God, to love our fellow-creatures.

And let me observe, in the last place, that love is superior to faith and hope because it makes us partakers of the very riches of God. God is glorious beyond all thought, and Christ is happy beyond all expression; and if you and I, being redeemed and saved, reach that world where Christ is, we shall see His happiness and His glory. Now imagine that we could be selfish in this matter, and could go to heaven simply that we might be rescued from hell, we should not then share in the glory of Christ. Recollect that as His redeemed people we shall be made full of love, and therefore made like Him; so that we can enter into His own glorious perfections. And then, in looking round upon the happiness of saints and the happiness of Christ, we are happy in their happiness, we rejoice in their joy; and this is, I believe, what our Saviour promised when He said, "He that overcometh shall sit with Me on My throne," that is, we shall then share His glorious joy, see in Him the king of glory, rejoice in

His wide dominion and His all-perfect blessedness, and the blessedness of Christ our Master will be our own blessedness throughout eternity.

Brethren, let me, then, ask you whether you have obtained these enduring possessions. Has God given you faith and hope and love? If not, allow me earnestly to ask that you will give yourselves earnestly to the seeking for them. If you do not feel that you are exercising "faith and hope and love," without which—I tell you the truth—you had better never have possessed a rational soul, and never have heard the name of God, do not lose another day or hour, but seek those blessings now from that bountiful hand which has, I believe, given them to many here. By all our own experience of them we urge you to seek these blessings. Respecting other things good men may contend and discuss without end, but on this point all good men are agreed. If I address irreligious men here, to whom the dissensions of good men are a stumbling-block, I ask you to put those dissensions out of your mind. When you have done so love still remains. If you were to question religious men of every nation and of every church, they would say to you, "You must believe, hope, and love; if you do so you will be blessed, if you do not you will be lost."

If, then, we would be among the number of Christ's rescued people we must believe, hope, and love. Believe, hope, and love, and you will have the seal of God's approbation set upon you; and being now candidates for immortality, whenever the Almighty shall be pleased to summon you to your last account, having your sins washed away and your souls accepted through the Redeemer, you will enter on an unknown and irreversible condition with triumph.

And then, my Christian friends, if these great and enduring possessions are so valuable, let me entreat you, as I would charge it on my own conscience, that they may be cultivated and confirmed. Let it be our fixed and constant effort to grow in faith, in hope, and in love. Let this be the use of this one sermon—of this day's meditation. If this sermon does you any good, it will lead you to go from your seats to-day, and by every means within your power to seek more faith, more hope, and more love. They have already cheered many of you, already promoted your welfare. You have them, and in some measure know their value. Do not live with a small experience of faith, hope and love. Do battle manfully with those things in the world which tempt you to be content with a little of these possessions. Let not the acquisition of wealth, or the securing of the world's favour, or the attainments of intellect, or anything which this world can offer, lead you to neglect them. Cherish day by day faith, hope, and love. Use all the means by which you may cherish them. I do not hesitate to say, that there is no Christian in this assembly who need be without a daily progress in faith, hope, and love. It glorifies God; it secures your happiness; it fits you for the duties of life; it will irradiate your families with joy. Oh! do not be neglectful, as, alas! even the redeemed can be, of these great blessings. Get more of them by bringing your minds into contact with that which excites them more and more—by taking care day by day to think what God is, and Christ is, and hope is, and the work of the Spirit, by letting your minds dwell upon the happiness, if you have cares; and oh! brethren, do not expect in some hour of unlooked for triumph, and of remarkable life from heaven, that you should at once secure the strength of the Christian character. No, God means that we should work for all our blessings, and for these among others, and that every day we should get a little more of them. "Prayer and painstaking," said the admirable missionary Elliot, "can by the blessing of God do everything;" and as it is true of any lower efforts, so it is eminently true of this.

And finally, my brethren, I would add but one more reflection. If you would have a cheerful life, as devoted servants of God, recollect what is recorded in the eighty-fourth Psalm, and many other places—"No good thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly." Exercise this gracious love in its actings day by day; go forth as conscientious followers of the Saviour to do your duty in all the concerns of life, with a rigid integrity, with a sensitive conscience, seeking to be enlightened in all truth and duty, determined to do the will of God in all things; and so walking uprightly before God, he will strengthen faith, and hope, and charity. And so may you, my dear brethren, glorify God much in your earthly course, and enjoy that happiness in serving God which is a pledge and a preparation for the greater bliss which we hope for hereafter.

THE REFUSAL TO WORSHIP THE GOLDEN IMAGE.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. JAMES PARSONS.

PREACHED IN LOWER STREET CHAPEL, ISLINGTON,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the London Missionary Society.

"There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."—Daniel iii. 12.

It has, my brethren, sometimes and justly been remarked, that truth is far more wonderful than fiction. Events certainly have transpired in the history of individual men, which no fictitious narrative can approach. This fact, which has been abundantly evidenced in the ordinary course of providential affairs, has occasionally been still more emphatically displayed by the manner in which God has distinctly intervened, by His own agency, for purposes relating to the well-being of His creatures and to His own glory. The reality of such occurrences we shall not now occupy time in debating; but the general purpose of those occurrences it is of immense importance to ascertain and to improve; and applying the language of the psalmist, "Whoso is wise and will understand these things, they shall know the lovingkindness of the Lord."

The sacred writings present to us various analogies, illustrating the remarks we have now adduced—the exhibition of them being always intended to promote those great designs, on account of which the Scriptures were originally given. Without referring your attention to other portions, let me remind you how the book of the prophet Daniel records events most extraordinary in the circumstances they involve, and most useful in the lessons they inculcate. Of those events an instance is before you, associated with the language we have read. It extends, you will remark, throughout the whole of the chapter; and our design is to enforce and illustrate it so that its instructions may be deduced and may be impressed upon all. Those instructions you will find to be by no means inappropriate to the immediate occasion which has convened us; while above all things they will tend, when rightly applied, to the highest benefit of our immortal souls.

We design to observe from this narrative, the mandate of imperial power which had been issued; the manner in which that mandate was treated; the principles upon which the treatment of that mandate was founded, and upon which it was justified; and the results which that treatment, so vindicated and justified, produced.

I. In the first place, observe, the mandate of imperial power which had been issued.

The person from whom the mandate now referred to had emanated, was Nebuchadnezzar, the monarch of the vast and gorguous empire of Babylon. We are informed, that "the king made an image of gold;" and there is reason to believe that this was a proud vindication of his own empire and an idolatrous perversion of the interpretation rendered by the prophet Daniel of his memorable dream, recorded in the preceding chapter, where, as you observe, the successive principal monarchies of the earth are represented in the form of "a great image, whose brightness was excellent and whose form was terrible;" the head of the image being "of fine gold," and representing the monarchy of Babylon. Of this image we are informed, that the height was threescore cubits, being more than thirty-six yards, and the breadth of it was six cubits, being nearly four yards; these dimensions being intended to denote the resources of his personal magnificence and the fervour of his idolatrous zeal. "He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." Then, a service of great expence and solemnity was to be performed; for "the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." When the summons had been answered, and when the multitude was congregated according to the command, we are informed that "an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall

the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace : " this threatened punishment, we conceive, constituting also a part of the rites of Chaldee idolatry, which upon certain occasions demanded the sacrifice of human victims by fire.

Now in the mandate before us there was heinous and presumptuous sin ; and we shall briefly endeavour to notice the elements of which that heinous and presumptuous sin consisted. And we remark—

1. That it was a tyrannical encroachment beyond the just limits of civil authority. The monarch of Babylon had not, nor has any other monarch or person invested with worldly station or worldly power, the right of anywise controlling or attempting to influence the religious professions and religious department of his subjects. Human governments were created by Divine arrangement, in order that monarchs might order things aright in their secular or political capacity ; and their legitimate power of interference extends only to overt acts which are socially beneficial, on the one hand, or which are socially pernicious and injurious, on the other. Obedience to reasonable commands in this respect is an obligation ; but obedience to commands attempting to control opinion and conscience is no obligation at all. True reason, true expediency, and, above all, the claims of that great Being to whom all men are equally accountable for the formation of opinion and for the use of conscience, demand the distinction which was pronounced by the great Teacher—" Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's ; " and whoever dares to pass the boundary may well be met by the stern challenge of inspiration—" Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own Master he standeth or falleth. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save or to destroy." The mandate, then, before us was a flagrant wrong ; and the repetition of that wrong in various ages by the powers of the earth must always be deprecated as most disastrous to the improvement, the peace, the dignity, and the happiness of mankind.

2. Again, you will observe of this mandate, that it was a daring impiety against the majesty and claims of the only true God. We have observed that the image of gold was an idol, and that the people were commanded to prostrate themselves before it in religious worship—here being a repetition of one of the acts of that great system of Pagan apostacy which sprang up in the infancy of the world, which extends itself even now over the larger proportion of the territory and population of the globe, and which always has been and must be the last and the worst insult which creatures can perpetrate against their Creator. You doubtless remember at once the law which that Creator had promulgated in early times, in direct denunciation of the apostacy referred to, pronounced by His own voice and written by His own finger—" Thou shalt not have any gods before Me." " Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments." Of the flagrancy and the turpitude of the violation of this law, especially as to what had passed in the history of the perpetrator, we need not speak ; it palpably suggests itself ; and we have only to mourn that it constitutes but one of a crowd of instances which have occurred in the history of nations, where the majesty of Heaven has been insulted by idolatry in its open and avowed developments, or by idolatry disguised under the semblance of truth ; but equally, if not more noxious, have been the special acts to which the potentates of the earth have lent the mighty energies of their power ; and what insult has thus been offered to Him upon whose will the universe is suspended, who alone is Jehovah, and who has sworn by Himself that He will not give His glory to another !

3. Again, you will observe of this mandate, that it was a cruel outrage on the impulses of benevolence and of humanity. To threaten men that if they did not fall down and worship a golden image they should be cast into a furnace of fire there to endure the very worst and most excruciating agonies which the human frame can undergo, was indeed beyond expression savage. And here, brethren, we cannot but observe an illustration of the keenness of despotic power in all periods of time. Its grand principle has well been stated by the evangelical expositor of the Spirit of the Lord to be the inspiration of fear ; and hence the countries where it has existed and been dominant have always been distinguished by the number, by the combination, and by the unrelenting severity of their punishments. The history of ancient and of modern despotism has been uniform ; and the blackest deeds in their annals have generally been manifested in the connection which is now before us, namely, the infliction of vengeance on those who in antagonism to command have resolved on the maintenance of what they believed to be genuine and religious

truth. My brethren, one fact will be deduced from the testimony of successive generations upon earth, that despotism is utterly selfish, callous and heartless—that it cannot feel—or that if it do feel, the miseries which it creates and inflicts are the aliment upon which it feeds with gloating ecstasy and delight; and let us remember, as one glorious contrast, that the only thing which is beneficent in human rule is freedom.

II. We have thus illustrated the mandate of imperial power which was issued; and after these developments of its character, we now proceed to notice, secondly, the manner in which this imperial mandate was treated.

Upon the day of the immense assembly, amidst the pomp of music, there was an almost universal adoration; for we read—"At that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." Some, however, there were, who dissented from the common mass, and who refused to obey the command of the inflated tyrant. "At that time," we read, "certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews;" the Jews, you are aware, being at this period enduring their long-threatened captivity, in consequence of their national sins. Of that nation there were three young men, whose names are mentioned in the language which we have read as our text, who (as we learn from the preceding chapter) had received the inestimable blessing of early piety, and who, on account of their personal beauty and their mental accomplishments had been in the palace of Babylon for the special service of its master. These, among all others, were the persons who were bade to pay the required homage on that memorable day. The malignant minions who accused them came and said unto the king—"O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." The offenders were then conducted to the presence of the enraged monarch, who for a season restrained his passion and afforded them an opportunity of retracing their steps: "Is it true," he said, "O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace;" and he utters the daring challenge—"Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" But there was no acknowledgment of his god, there was no supplication for pardon, there was no promise of submission. They "answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter;" and then, after assigning the noble reason which will soon after be illustrated, they said—"Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." It was thus that the mandate was treated by these illustrious men; and there are two departments distinguishing that treatment which may now properly be commended distinctly to your attention.

1. And first, you will observe that there was firmness. The decision which at first they manifested, in refusing to unite in the adorations of a prostrate multitude, standing erect and alone while they were humbling themselves before the image, was an act of great decision and courage; the decision, you observe, being enhanced on the one hand by the threatened punishment which they knew would be inflicted, and on the other by the court favour which they had received, and which doubtless was yet in prospect. The monarch seemed to have almost a claim upon their gratitude, that they should consent to his will and should obey him. Their subsequent perseverance also, when they stood in the presence before which nations were accustomed to tremble, is very remarkable, as conveyed in the announcements which we have read—"We are not careful to answer thee in this matter;" "be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up;" thus evincing that they were prepared to go to the endurance of their torture and their death. They remind us, my brethren, here, of others who have stood unflinching before tyrants in subsequent times. They remind us of the Lord Jesus, who "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;" they remind us of Peter and of John, before the tribunal that was yet red with their Master's blood, declaring, "we cannot but speak the

things which we have seen and heard ;" " we ought to obey God rather than man ;" and then departing, " rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name's sake." They remind us of Stephen, who bore his testimony to the crucified and glorified One, when his murderers were glaring around him in the last excitement of their frenzied malice ; and they remind us of a noble army beyond, who " loved not their lives unto the death," and who from the martyr's pang have sprung to the martyr's ecstasy, and who from the martyr's endurance have ascended to the martyr's crown. Here, my brethren, will be found a model for ourselves ; and it ought to be our highest ambition, that in their fellowship we too may be united. We are not surrounded in our days of privilege with tyrants and difficulties like them, though attachment to such a cause as that of the Redeemer never can be embraced without peril, either from persecution on the one hand, or from blandishment on the other ; but let it be our resolution, in spite of whatever may threaten, and in spite of whatever may defy, to abide firm and undaunted to God and to His will. Let us be " valiant for the truth upon the earth ;" and let it be our constant aim, that being " followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," we may indulge the glowing hope of being ultimately united in their glory.

2. And again, you will observe, that besides firmness there was also meekness. You cannot have listened attentively to the narrative before you, without having observed the beautiful manifestations of this spirit. There was no ebullition of self-sufficiency or of anger ; there was respect for regal dignity and station—there was forbearance, there was quietness, there was readiness to suffer ; they resisted the wrong, but they did not rebel against the penalty. It is always important, in advocating the rights of conscience and of religious truth, that in the same manner mildness should be blended with courage, and gentleness with resolution. What an admirable example of this there was in the history of the Prince of martyrs, the Lord Jesus ; for " when He was reviled He reviled not again, and when He was threatened He answered not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously ;" " He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth ;" and when He was suspended upon the cross, when His malignant foes were exulting in their triumph, and feeding their malice upon the manifestations of His expiring agony, it was for them His parting prayer—" Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The want of this spirit, brethren, among those who have pleaded the right of conscience and of truth has often inflicted deep injury upon the best and the holiest of causes. There has been the indulgence of a rugged dogmatism and vehemence ; there has been not seldom a resort to the use of force, the fighting of battles, and an endeavour after retaliation ; and even when revenge would have struck deep injury upon both liberty and religion, and would have mournfully retarded and held back the time of their progress and the era of final freedom. Oh ! that the disciples of the Gospel, in the stirring times in which we live, amidst all their conflicts and amidst all their efforts for its progression, for its disenthralment and for its triumph, would listen to and obey, as though under a very spell, the touching exclamation of the great apostle—" I myself beseech you, by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ." And in meekness and in gentleness, blended with firmness, will be found, as only can be found, resistless and omnipotent power.

III. From this part of our address we proceed to observe, thirdly, the principles upon which the treatment of that mandate was founded, and upon which it was justified ; and you will observe, in the analysis of the narrative, that they were principles worthy of the occasion, and amply vindicating the course which was pursued.

1. Observe, there was conviction of their duty and responsibility to God. Their language is—" our God whom we serve." They were endued with reverence and with love to Him, and these principles, associated with the relationship they embodied, prevented by moral necessity that they could be guilty of the glaring impiety of adoring publicly, in the presence of immense masses, a thing graven by art and man's device, created by man's base passions for man's base and bad designs. In the principle in this manner enunciated, you will observe, they took the highest ground under the highest influences—religion, imparted and preserved by the Spirit of God. And this, brethren, is alone worthy of the occasion when the rights of conscience and of truth are to be vindicated. This principle is alone able to inspire the blended meekness and firmness which we have described, and this principle alone can by possibility secure the results in which truth and righteousness prevail. In resistance to arbitrary and oppressive power there are indeed other motives which to a certain extent must be acknowledged as good. The hatred of oppression and of cruelty is good ; the love for the well-being of our country is

good ; the love of freedom and of social amelioration is good ; but all of these are capable of being polluted, as oftentimes they have been polluted, by mere vulgar passions, through the influence of which they have been neutralised, and oftentimes absolutely impaired. But, my brethren, the principle to which we now appeal is incapable of being polluted. Religion, inspired and engraven by the power of the Spirit of God, cannot be contaminated, in its legitimate operation, by means of the malignity of man. It holds its integral elements in all their power and in all their spotless holiness, working on in spite of all towards the glorious fulfilment of its magnificent end.

Let me entreat you, my brethren, to apply the important truth before you to yourselves. We have adverted already to the aspect of the times in which we live—and those times are indeed fraught with event, and impregnated, we hope, with momentous destinies. There are warring opinions and warring principles ; and doubtless a period is at hand, when the conflict will become yet more earnest, and yet more hot and more decided. I would have you to remember, that you can only take a right part in that conflict, avoiding its evils and concurring to the intended excellency of its result, as you yourselves are endued with the power of Divine grace. In the Gospel of the Redeemer you have no right to stir a step, you have no right to utter a word, you have no right to exert an influence on the progress of events, with a hope of amelioration and success, except your hearts are first rendered, in sincere and in solemn devotedness, to the service of Jehovah. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." You must descend from secondary impulses to that which alone is first ; and see to it that at the crisis you act under a deep conviction of your duty and of your responsibility to your God.

2. Again : you will observe also, there was confidence in the power and readiness of God to deliver. We have seen that the monarch of Babylon uttered this challenge—"Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?" And then they replied—"We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." They knew that they were right ; they knew that He to whom they were devoted had power to quench the fire of that furnace, and to cause them to be harmless ; or they knew that if He permitted them there to suffer in agony and unto death, He would sustain and support them, and render those flames but vehicles through which they were to ascend to higher and holier mansions, where they should be crowned with honour and felicity in His immediate presence in the immortal state ; and therefore it was that they stood firm and undaunted to the last. And how delightful it is, brethren, to remember, that the principles upon which they acted are principles which are presented to us throughout the whole of inspiration as those by which we should be modelled ; for who knows not that the command is, that under the most difficult circumstances of our life we are yet to put confidence in God ? Listen to the address once pronounced by Him whom we serve, to His ancient church, in the time of its direst extremity : "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Need I detain you by illustrating the manifestation of this ground of thrilling encouragement, as rendered throughout the history of individuals and throughout the history of the embodied church ? Brethren, let us cherish the confidence now. Let us cherish it for ourselves, and know that "nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord." Let us cherish it in behalf of the cause which is to us dear as our immortal spirits—the cause of the Redeemer's glory in the salvation of man and the conversion of the world ; and let us never be guilty even of dreaming of such an era as when the church shall be in danger. False systems, which have usurped the name, may be in danger, but the true church never. Can the throne of the eternal Father be in danger ? Can the mediatorial majesty of the Lord Jesus be in danger ? Talk not of danger, while He lives who bought the church by His blood, and who pronounced—"Upon this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Confidence, my brethren, as the Scripture tells us, is our strength. "If God be for us, who then can be against us ?"

IV. But now let us proceed to notice, the results in which the treatment thus vindicated and justified was made to issue.

You will observe here what a singular combination of circumstances claims from the narrative our regard. The immediate result was the infliction of the punishment. "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego : therefore he

spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot : "for you understand that the furnace was not some enclosed place, such as is now designated by the name, but an open spot dug from the earth and filled with combustible elements on fire, so that observation on all sides was perfectly easy : "because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." And now their doom surely was sealed, and after a brief excruciating agony their end must come. But no ; their confidence was not misplaced, and they were delivered.

Observe the method in which that deliverance was accomplished. What strange amazement was it which seized the monarch, as from a secure distance he gazed upon that flaming spot ? He "was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ?"—every word of the inquiry possessing an emphasis. "They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." We do not conceive that here was on the part of the monarch of Babylon a direct and vital recognition of Him whom we designate the Son of God ; we conceive that he spake but in oriental mode of phraseology—a son of God, a divinity, some mighty supernatural being, who protects and marvellously preserves. Yet at the same time we do not hesitate to acknowledge our belief, that here was the Son of God—He who was manifested "in the fulness of time" in that character as the Saviour of the world, and He who as the deliverer of the church had been manifested from the beginning—the Angel of the Divine presence, the Angel of the covenant, the Angel who spake with Abraham on the plains of Mamre—He who wrestled with Jacob, and permitted Himself to be subdued by prayer—He who came to Moses in the burning bush, and went with the church in the wilderness—He who was revealed to Joshua as "the Captain of the Lord's host," girding him to valour and to prowess for the conquest of the promised land—He who stood by the sacrifice of Gideon and of Manoah, telling of deliverance and of victory—and He who now is with His people, and will be with them "always, even to the end of the world ;" the Son of God is the Being to whom the glory of the deliverance is to be ascribed ; and the Son of God is to receive the honour of all deliverance for the redeemed and new covenant church, until that church in all its parts shall stand complete before His immediate presence, amidst the pomp and splendour of the last day, and shall "ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and dominion to Him for ever."

Lastly, you must observe the characteristics by which this deliverance was distinguished. It was accomplished by the agency of the Son of God ; and its characteristics require briefly to be noticed.

It was, you will observe, indisputably attested. There was nothing equivocal in the mode by which the deliverance was known. "Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the Most High God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." They were entirely uninjured and unscathed. And, brethren, this only indicates a general principle in the Divine interpositions—that when God interposes for the welfare and deliverance of His people, there is nothing uncertain ; there is not such an intermingling of secondary instrumentalities that we are unable to separate or to discern the interference of the power of the great First Cause ; there is always something in every event by which a devout and enlightened mind is able to pronounce "God is here ; here is the work of God." And it is a delightful fact in the history of the church now, as it will be in the annals of the church in time to come, that wherever God interferes for the welfare of His people He accomplishes His work thoroughly.

Briefly announcing this, we observe again, that the deliverance produced a vast public impression. The impression, as it was immediately produced, is noticed in the last verses of the chapter : "Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath

sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill : because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon." The decree manifested a mighty impression on the mind of the monarch, though it was the vulgar resort of a yet unenlightened tyranny, and though the impression would not be much valued by these holy and dignified men, who had learned by past experience not to put their trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom is no help : but the impression continued, and it took its place in that series of occurrences by which the march of providence and of grace among the nations was advanced, till the time came when the developement was to be secured by the advent of the everlasting Gospel. And all deliverances, brethren, for individuals or for an embodied church are conducted in the same train and are tending towards the same result. There is nothing that was accomplished for the church in the earliest times, nothing for individuals, nothing that is accomplished for the embodied church or for individuals now, nothing that shall be accomplished for individuals, or the embodied church in time to come, but what shall be found moulded and combined in one grand scheme of operation by Him who knoweth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet performed, securing the result when idolatry and all orders of antagonism against God and the power of His Christ, shall be overruled and extinguished—when freedom and truth and righteousness shall prevail—when the dominion shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and when He who came down to earth as an ignominious victim shall again come to it in power and majesty as a conqueror, receiving the inheritance of the universe, and causing the spoils of that universe to be laid triumphantly at His feet. We are looking onward to the time which the preceding passage has stated, when the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, shall be broken to pieces and become "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind shall carry it away," and when the stone that strikes the image shall "become a great mountain and shall fill the whole earth." His kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Now, brethren, we have endeavoured to place before you a portion of Scripture which appears to us to take a high place among the topics we have insisted on, as suited to our own particular circumstances in the day in which we live ; and I would pray of you, that apart from mere historical illustration you would take the principles we have endeavoured gradually and legitimately to elucidate into your intellects and your hearts ; and permit me now to occupy your attention for a few moments further, in inculcating some more especial lessons, which it is very important to pronounce and to impress.

1. And, in the first place, we learn from the narrative before us, the value of early piety. We have been informed of the three Hebrew youths, whose history has been before you, that they had in youth devoted themselves to the service of God. And from that event what great results arose !—results to themselves, results to the nation with which they were associated, results to the church and to the world in the remotest ages of time. Had they been destitute of that precious boon, they would have become fervid, but with the idolatry of the day, they would have perished and they would have been forgotten ; but because they possessed early piety their names (as it were) float with buoyancy along the stream of time, and they are canonized with a memory which is imperishable and which is immortal. All this was the result of early piety and of devotedness to God ! I am addressing myself this morning to many young persons of both sexes, with high opportunities for devotedness and for usefulness, and with regard to whom there is perhaps reason to fear that they have not surrendered their heart to Him who has required it and who deserves it. My dear young friends, permit me to remind you, it is well for you to seek for social distinction and for competence and for knowledge, and for various appliances by which comfort and elevation in secular matters may be secured to you ; but all these are nothing and they will be perverted and poisoned, if they be not consecrated by the influence of piety and of devotedness to God. You have dreamt that honour is found in worldliness, and you have dreamt that degradation is to be found in religion ; but the most enlightened, the most wealthy, the most exalted, are but vulgar and base without the hallowing influence of piety ; the poorest and the most ignorant are dignified, if there be the presence of genuine and decided consecration to God. I ask you, brethren, and sisters, to render yourselves to the influence of religion.

Religion is all—as one of the incomparable hymns of our peerless sacred poet has pronounced—and you have learnt the couplet from your infancy.

"Twill save you from a thousand snares,
To mind religion young;
Grace will preserve your tender years,
And make your virtues strong."

And while it secures peace and pleasure to yourselves, it will give you happy qualification for usefulness in the age in which you live; and your affection and meekness and activity and zeal will doubtless take their places in sanctified combination with others, in extending and advancing the cause of piety in the world to generations yet unborn. My son, My daughter, saith He who alone has a right to speak, and to be heard, and to be obeyed—"give Me thine heart." Surrender that heart in the morning of your days; rely upon it that in time and through eternity you will never regret it.

Again: we learn also the immense importance of decision for God under the most difficult of circumstances. If the example of these Hebrew youths at this crisis had been wanting, even had their personal piety remained intact, how evil would have been the consequence! Had they with some mental weakness bowed, or had they been absent far away under some plausible pretence or excuse—how different would have been the result! Not a voice to be raised for God amidst that vast assembly, and the honour of God deeply and painfully compromised in that nation and other nations for ages! Their decision, brethren, was the gem by which imperishable worth was assigned to the event of that day. We live in an age of compromise and of poltroonery; there is not a Christian man or woman that is really what he or she ought to be for Christ and for His cause. I appeal to your own consciences, and challenge you whether you are not conscious of countless acts of cowardice, whilst you can at the most number up a very few of genuine courage and decision. I ask you, brethren—for we must leave it to your own consciences and to your closets—whether you plead not guilty in this matter, and whether, by worldly conformity of various classes and orders, you have not deeply sacrificed what belongs to the majesty of your Redeemer and the salvation of the world. If to professing Christians who know that they are guilty I could render an exhortation, which should be remembered while all else is forgotten, it would be in the language of that noble man in the crisis of his martyrdom to the person whom he loved best on earth, when he said—"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord." Oh! that you could answer—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!"

"Asham'd of Jesus? can it be?
A mortal man ashamed of Thee!
Scorn'd be the thought, by rich and poor,
Oh! may I scorn it more and more

Asham'd of Jesus! of that Friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No, when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere His name

Asham'd of Jesus! Yes, I may,
When I've no sins to wash away;
No tears to wipe, no joys to crave,
And no immortal soul to save.

Till then - nor is the boasting vain;
Till then, I'll boast a Saviour slain.
And oh! may this my glory be,
That He is not ashamed of me."

And then, finally, we learn the folly of opposition to the people and to the cause of God. It cannot be hindered by the blandishments or by the opposition of the world; it stands aloft amidst the wreck of empires, and it suffers not amidst the fury of contending nations; it rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm, and never shall cease its manifestation until it shall establish an empire bounded only by the limits of the universe, and terminating only with the destruction of the world. See to it, brethren, that you oppose not that, individually, or by combination, which is indestructible. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, and the Lord shall have you in derision;" and so shall it be, until you shall "perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little." There is no safety but in the church and with the people of God—the church of God being constituted of the redeemed people of God, by whatever name or class they may be known. He who has repented toward God and believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, belongs to the imperishable and the indestructible church. And you, brethren, have but to comply with our invitation—you have but to repent and believe the Gospel: then you will be partakers of their privileges, their protection, their honour, and their imperishable crown. Let us pray for ourselves and for each other, that having borne a fearless, faithful, holy, prayerful testimony to the truth on earth, we may be gathered to celebrate its triumph in the ecstasies of a nobler world.

A Sermon,

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

PREACHED IN SURREY CHAPEL, BLACKFRIARS ROAD,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 27, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews—

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Corinthians iii. 18.

THE glory of God shines forth with admirable lustre in the various works of His hand, which we are permitted to contemplate and examine; but there is yet a veil, which obscures that glory, so that the nations of the world, which have the works of creation before their eyes, have not attained to any just knowledge of their Maker. He has likewise illustrated His goodness and His power in the dispensations of His providence—so much so as to excite the admiration of His children who are acquainted with them; but here also there is much obscurity and apparent contradiction—at least, that is, ungodly persons by millions cannot perceive the glory of God, as it shines in the dispensations of His providence. Nature and providence are alike obscure—partly from the circumstances in which we are placed in a fallen world, and partly from the blindness of men's hearts. But God has given us a revelation of Himself, which more directly, and not as a matter of reasoning, reveals to us His moral glory. In this Book that glory shines forth admirably, to those who believe and comprehend it. From the first time when God manifested Himself to man, by this revelation of Himself in words, had His own people seen much of His glory. It shone especially in the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been the great theme of revelation from the period of the first promise made to our fallen parents to this day. But the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ was obscured during the Mosaic dispensation, by the form in which the revelation of Him was made. And therefore the apostle tells us, that the veil which Moses put upon his face, when he had been talking with God, was an apt illustration of the dispensation over which he presided, and that there was a similar obscuration of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in the prophecies and in the typical representations of Him, with which the law abounded. That veil has been now done away, and we no longer behold the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as manifested in a promise at once so magnificent and yet so obscure as this—"He shall bruise thy head;" nor in another typical representation, at once so remarkable and yet so little comprehended, at the time when the brazen serpent was lifted up, to foreshadow His death for sinners on the cross. But we now have the revelation of God's love to man in Christ Jesus, Emmanuel, plainly, repeatedly and variously, in God's Word. The veil has, therefore, been removed from revelation, and we are permitted to see the glory of God now shining upon us in the mirror of the Gospel, without a veil.

There was, however, another veil, which hung between the minds of men and the reception of Divine truth, of which the apostle also speaks when he says "Even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." There was a veil upon Divine truth, inasmuch as it was not directly and clearly made known, but made known by obscure prophecies and types; but there was also an ignorance of that truth, owing to the indisposition of men's hearts to entertain it. When, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, the revelation became complete—the manifestation of God became as perfect as He saw it to be good for us (perhaps possible for us) to have it, in our present state; still "the light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not," and we read especially of the Jews, by whom our Lord was surrounded, that notwithstanding this revelation made to them of the glory of Jesus Christ, and of the glory of God whom He represented, they could not believe it, because Esaias said again, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." They were so filled with prejudice and pride and self-righteousness, so opposed to a system as spiritual as that of Christ, and to His own holy character, that God left them to this perverseness of their hearts, and therefore this blindness of their understanding.

and they rejected Him who came to save them. Now, alas! this second veil remains still on men's minds; and if there are any (as I fear there are multitudes in this assembly) who have not turned to God in earnest and have never become the true disciples of Christ, as certainly as the veil was upon the heart of the unbelieving Jew, is the veil upon their hearts at this moment. It is not that God has not given an abundant revelation of His glory in Christ—it is not that every truth necessary for our welfare here and hereafter is not clearly and explicitly unfolded; but pride, and prejudice, and passion, and self-interest, and the fashion of this world, and the support of numbers, and the natural alienation of men's hearts from God, hinder those who are unconverted from seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word; and still the veil is upon their hearts. But in contrast with the unbelieving Jews of that day and all unbelievers now, the apostle says with reference to the disciples of Christ, of whom I rejoice in knowing there are multitudes in this assembly—respecting all of them the apostle says in this passage—"But ye all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

You observe in this passage that there are three truths distinctly summoning us to regard them. The first is, the view which Christians take of the glory of the Lord—"We all, with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" the second is, the effect of that view—"We all, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" and the third is, the means by which that effect is produced—in other words, how Christians are "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

I. By "the Lord," I need scarcely remind you, the Lord Jesus Christ is intended. Look into the fourteenth verse of the first chapter of this epistle, and then again into the fifth verse of the fourth chapter, and you will observe, that in those places the Saviour is so termed. And the apostle Paul, in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans, has expressed himself very strongly with respect to this point—"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; for to this end Christ both rose and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living." Though the term does sometimes in the New Testament, and frequently in the Old Testament, express Jehovah, yet in the New Testament generally, in a much larger number of places, it is spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom our text speaks, when it says, that Christians behold "the glory of the Lord." The moral glory of Christ is said in our text to shine forth in the Gospel as in a mirror. There His moral glory is reflected. There might have been an obscurity thrown over that revelation, the mirror might have had a veil upon it—or (as we have seen) our own hearts might have had a veil upon them, hindering us from seeing the glory of Christ, as reflected in the Gospel; but the apostle says of Christians, that "we with open face"—with a face, that is, from which the veil has been removed—"behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and he declares this to be true of all believers, without exception—"we all beholding the glory of the Lord." It is, therefore, a truth which is general, and relates to all Christians in this assembly, as well as to all others throughout the world—that "we all with open face," from which the veil has been removed, are able to see in the Gospel reflected as in a mirror the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians, when prejudice and ignorance are removed, are able, in meditating on His Word, to see the glory of the Saviour's history in this world. It is perfectly beyond parallel:—the glory of His incarnation, His sufferings, His miracles, His doctrine, His willing sacrifice on our behalf, His dying in our place on the accursed tree—the glory of His demonstrated resurrection, of which five hundred persons were witnesses at once—and then the glory of His ascension, which numbers also beheld, when He ascended up to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Christians behold the glory of these facts, as revealed in the Gospel; and these facts in His history, combined with His own professions, manifest His glory as Emmanuel. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father." And when His disciples beheld Him on earth, they saw in Him "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." They saw then the glory of Him as perfect Man and perfect God. They saw in the character of Jesus Christ one who exhibited every human perfection; and though He was surrounded by the most keensighted and malignant enemies, no man ever detected or ventured to charge Him with any fault. But beside the human glory which His disciples could witness, and can now read and meditate on in His Word, He had the glory of the eternal Son of God, who came forth from the Father into this world, "God manifest in the flesh," in whom "the fulness of the Godhead" resided bodily.

and who was the effulgence of His glory and the visible representation of His essence—or, as it is translated, “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person”—the shining forth to men of the very glory of God the Father, in the visible representation of His invisible essence.

This glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, who as Emmanuel was come down into this world, that He might atone for our transgressions, believers rejoiced in contemplating; and knowing Him thus to be the eternal Son of God, who was descended upon earth to accomplish His Father's will for men, Christians delighted further in contemplating, as revealed in the Gospel, the glory of His work on earth for sinners. He came here to be emphatically the servant of God: “Thou art My servant, O Israel,” the Almighty said by His prophet unto Him, “in whom I will be glorified.” Never was such obedience rendered to God as that which the Lord Jesus Christ rendered when He was upon earth. And as He was the servant of God, so He was the bruiser of Satan; He came to be the great Liberator of the human race, and to accomplish that earliest prophecy so frequently afterwards in substance renewed—“He shall bruise thy head.” He “came to destroy the works of the devil;” and that which ages of human suffering had not accomplished, and which all the intellect of man had never ventured even to attempt or predict, the Lord Jesus Christ came to accomplish for man—to bruise the head of Satan; in other words, to destroy his power and influence in the world. Christians rejoice in seeing Him as the servant of Jehovah, as the bruiser of Satan, and as such the great Redeemer of men, who came to pay that price for our liberation from the curse and the death eternal which we had merited, and which no other person could effect on our behalf. We rejoice in thinking of Christ as Him who is the High Priest of His people, because as a Priest He made for them in His own person a sacrifice abundantly able to atone for our sins; and then, because we know Him to be our own prevalent and unwearied Intercessor at the right hand of God, that we as His friends, believing on Him, may be pardoned and accepted for His sake, we can see the glory of His work in heaven who is now the universal Sovereign, who having accomplished the will of God in the redemption of man, has gone up to His glory, to wield the sceptre of the universe and employ His unlimited resources for the welfare of those whom He loved and has saved.

Christians, when they meditate on the Gospel and on what is revealed of Him and His work, can see the glory of His great perfections, as they shine forth in that work. Not to mention many other traits, all of which appeared in Him with transcendent separate lustre and marvellous combination and perfection, Christians can see the attributes of His greatness and goodness; they can see shining in the Gospel His holiness, which shrank not from the curse when He would magnify His Father's law—His goodness, which would not leave wretched sinners to perish, though they well deserved it, but would bear His Father's wrath against our sins in our place, and thus bring to a share in His own happiness the meanest and the most endangered of those who belong to Him.

Christians, while they see in the Gospel shining forth the glory of His great perfections—holiness which has no stain, and goodness which has no parallel, in Him who is as condescending as beneficent, as gentle as condescending, as patient and faithful as He is gentle, rejoice at the same time in seeing the glory of Christ manifested as the effect of the revelation He has made of Himself to the world. They see His glory in giving the Spirit of God to His own universal church, transforming the characters of men who otherwise would have perished in the obduracy of their hearts and in the unconquerable force of their passions, and then by degrees, accomplishing that transformation of society in this world which shall at last make one universal hosannah ascend to God when this universe is reclaimed, and immortal myriads, who lived to dishonour Him, shall employ all their faculties of mind and body throughout this renovated earth, in giving glory to Him against whom they had so revolted.

It is this glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as declared in the Gospel, in harmony with all the facts which have transpired since the revelation of the Gospel, that believers see with an open face. There was a time when they were hindered from perceiving its truths by their own corruptions; then pride and passion, then self-interest and prejudice, then the fear of the world and the love of the world, then a thousand false opinions greedily entertained, hindered them from seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that has been removed by grace; and, their hearts made serious, and their minds therefore made candid, they can now see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it shines forth in the Gospel and in the church. And this is true of them all; so that there is not one Christian on the earth who does not see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ—at least in such a degree as makes him an obedient servant for ever; there is not one who does not perceive Him to be a necessary and an all-sufficient Saviour, his best Friend, in one sense his only Friend, the Redeemer of

his lost soul, who is now giving him a thousand comforts, filling his heart and his home with joy, and preparing for him mansions above, to which He will hereafter receive him, in the exercise of the same unfailing compassion and goodness which has sought him out and saved him now. Then will believers, with faces unveiled, with minds from which prejudice has been removed, beholding in the Gospel, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, rejoice in Him for ever as their all-sufficient and only Saviour.

II. Let us now behold, as stated in the text, the effect of this sight: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

If you stand on some cloudless day, by the side of some deep and unruffled lake, upon which the glory of the sun is shining, at the proper angle, where you may see its glory reflected on the unruffled surface, the beams of glory from the sky shining upon your face will make you also radiant with the glory of the sun. You may see all nature sometimes lighted up in this way; not only those objects which come under the direct rays of the sun as it shines upon rock, tree and tower, but likewise those which are not within view of the sun, but upon which the reflection from the lake or any other mirror may be cast. According to this image the apostle says, that although we do not behold personally the Lord Jesus, yet we see His glory in the mirror of the Gospel, and that shining upon us transforms us to a measure of His own glory. The character of the believer becomes radiant with moral glory, when he beholds the moral glory of the Lord Jesus Christ unveiled, prejudice being removed from his mind.

Let me observe here, that this statement is again general, and that it is not the rich privilege of a small and peculiarly favoured class of the disciples of Christ of which the apostle speaks; but he says, "we *all* are changed into the same image," we all are contracting the moral glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; so that believers in general, and not some few rare and happy exceptions to the general rule, beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel, at once begin to resemble Him, to assume His likeness as far as His perfections are imitable, and to attain a resemblance to Him. His people, in other words, just to illustrate the thought for a moment, though it is impossible to survey this passage in its whole extent on the present occasion—His people, beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, obtain a likeness to His personal virtues. Because He was temperate, pure, courageous and good in all things, so they come in a measure to resemble Him in temperance, purity, fortitude, courage, constancy, and all other great personal virtues. He manifested, when He was on earth, (and the manifestation remains in the Gospel,) those excellent personal and social virtues which His disciples witnessing in Him are led to imitate; and as He was faultless in His justice, truth, and goodness among men, so His people also contract a resemblance to Him socially. Like Him they become upright in their principles and just in their dealings with one another—like Him they become true in all they say, and true also in the character of their actions; a sincerity which nothing can impeach, a truthfulness most tender and conscientious, are the characteristics of those who become the true disciples of the Redeemer; and as He blended beautifully in His character all that was most rigid and firm and great and high with all that was most gentle and lovely in humanity, so do His disciples, who see His glory in the Gospel, become like Him in this particular—good, gentle, beneficent, ready to diffuse happiness around them, careful not to injure the interests or wound the feelings of their fellow-men, sympathetic towards those who are in sorrow, condescending and compassionate even to the depraved, and manifest a discriminating affection for all those who love and honour Him.

But the great characteristic of the Lord Jesus was His godliness. It was that which shone forth with preeminent lustre; and in that, likewise, though the world comprehends it not, do His disciples especially resemble Him. As the Lord Jesus Christ could say on earth that it was "His meat and drink to do the will of His Father in heaven," it becomes likewise the joy of His people on earth to obey their God. As Christ, when upon earth, "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame," they learn like their Master to be spiritual, and however they may value the lower blessings of time, look forward with earnest hope to the superior blessings of eternity. As He, when upon earth, always did the things which pleased His Father, so the Christian knows no other limit to his obedience than his ultimate perfection, and wishes that all his faculties, through all his days and upon all occasions, should be employed for the glory of his God and Father. Thus as Jesus was holy, zealous, spiritual and devoted, so the disciples of Jesus Christ, when they behold this moral glory of their Master, learn to resemble Him, and become like Him godly, spiritual, devoted and zealous in the world. And this is said to be true of them all: for which we can see many reasons. For those who perceive the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as their own Saviour and Redeemer --

those who can realise the great fact that He has rescued them from perdition, and prepared by His own sacrifice and faithful life a place in heaven for them, how can they but feel the wish, and so strive successfully to attain resemblance to Him? We, as His followers, have learned what are our obligations to Him, and feel grateful for His redeeming love. I appeal to you, Christian brethren, whether it is not so. You know the greatness of the price which He has paid for you; you feel the vastness of the blessings He has bestowed upon you; you feel this day grateful to Christ as your best Friend and only Saviour: surely, you wish, then, to imitate Him, because you wish to glorify and honour Him. It is in proportion as we resemble His moral glory that we give Him honour in the world; and He who by His own sacrifice has rescued us from misery and made us partakers of eternal happiness, is well worthy this poor return. We who are disciples of Christ, then, are absolute dependants upon Him. Can we persevere without His aid? Does not His blessing make us holy and happy? Must not His care bring us to everlasting happiness? On Him we are infinitely dependent; and when we feel that dependence, we must therefore wish to secure His blessing; and His blessing is only secured when we imitate His pattern and comply with His commands. We who are believers in Jesus Christ, and have seen His glory, have had a great change pass upon our affections in consequence—so that that which was once unattractive to us, now appears lovely. The moral glory of our Lord Jesus Christ which He has revealed to us, was once too holy for our view—we shrank from it as a consuming fire; but it is now lovely to us; we delight in seeing that combination of all right dispositions towards God with all loving and just dispositions towards man. How can we, then, viewing that perfect pattern, but strive to resemble it? How can we but delight in imitating that which we supremely admire? And then, we who have seen the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, know that God has set Him as a pattern for our imitation. Jesus Christ has said:—“I have left you an example that ye should do as I have done;” “to that saint He abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked;” and if this is the rule He has given us to follow, we cannot be His disciples, we cannot even profess to obey Him, unless we strive in all things to resemble Him who has set to us this perfect example.

Further, we are looking forward to that day when we shall see our Lord face to face. Ere long we shall be with Him as we are with one another, and look in His face as we now look in each other's face. How can we anticipate that day and the happiness it will bring with it, unless we learn to be fit for its employments and its joys? We must be like Christ, to live with Him. If we are severed from Christ in character, we cannot be united with Him in glory; and therefore he who has this hope, desires to be pure even as He is pure, and is endeavouring continually to be ready for the life of glory above, by the life he now lives of obedience and conformity upon earth. They, then, who “behold with open face the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

Let me here notice that this effect is not accomplished at once—the passage before us says, “we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” At first there is little resemblance produced in the converted mind and heart. But when a person studies more this living character, and comes more under the influence of the constraining motives which surround us on all sides, and stream upon us like a flood of glory from heaven—his faults are daily subdued, each Christian virtue daily strengthened, each day the Christian man becomes less unlike his Lord, and at last may be said to resemble Him whom he loves and trusts. So that Christians are not to be discouraged because they find themselves in many things dissimilar. No; but remembering the end at which they aim, and to which they will attain, His perfect resemblance, they ought, step by step, and day by day, to be putting off their faults, and become less unlike their Master in character, dispositions and habits, until they perfectly resemble Him and are fit for His glory. And as this is said to be the condition of all those who are Christ's disciples, we should at this moment test our own character, and ask ourselves whether we are not the true followers of the Redeemer, by some measure of resemblance to Him; because if any man whom I address to-day is conscious that he has no measure of resemblance to His personal or social virtues on the one hand, nor to the godly disposition which prevailed in His life on the other hand, so that there is no resemblance between the Master and the professing servant, then you must know that you do not belong to Him, since the apostle says—“We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

III. I conceive that I have somewhat anticipated in the exposition of the passage the third question which we were to address ourselves to; namely, the means by which God accomplishes this merciful change; because the first of these means is our own beholding of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; and I

have already set before you, briefly and imperfectly, the way in which the sight of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ is calculated to make every follower of Christ to resemble his Lord, and the way in which we find in the Christian family that resemblance produced. But then alas! as I have noticed, the work is not at once perfect. We know by painful experience that it is a work of time and labour, that it requires much attention, and must be renewed after many failures. If, on the one hand, all Christians without exception are grateful to the Saviour and feel their dependence upon Him, and can by a renewed nature admire His glory and feel the necessity of complying with His commands, and are prompted with a desire for the happiness of heaven, and strive and prepare for it even now; so, on the other hand, there are just the opposite feelings incessantly assailing them as well as the rest of mankind. They are not only grateful, but have often to lament their ingratitude. They are dependent upon Him, absolutely dependent upon Him in fact; yet prosperity, pleasure, and thoughtlessness often make them feel as though they were independant. They admire the moral glory of Christ, but then there are many other things, which they admire in the world beside, and which tempt them away from Christ. If they desire to obey His will, so they desire often to follow their own will in many things which promise them pleasure or advantage. And if they have hearts in some measure attuned to the bliss of heaven, so they have hearts which are capable of sinking rapidly into a state of great worldliness and earthliness. These are all temptations to be unlike their Lord and Master—these are all temptations to disobey Him—these are all temptations to disregard those personal and social excellencies which shone in Christ. These are all temptations which hinder them from displaying that godliness in the world by which He would be honoured and the world benefitted.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, notwithstanding the powerful inducements that we have to seek to attain a resemblance to our Divine Master, and the degree of success that has already crowned the efforts of every true disciple, we might well give up our work in despair, and think that we should never attain to our resemblance to our Lord, or ever be prepared for His glory, if we were left to our own infirmities. Thank God, He has not so left us; for our text, in the next place, tells us that there is an aid guaranteed to every true disciple of Christ, which cannot fail, and which is abundantly adequate for the purposes for which it is given. The apostle therefore says, that Christians without one exception are changed into the same image with their Master, "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is highly reasonable that we should imitate the most perfect pattern. It is abundantly right and correct. It commends itself to our understanding and conscience that we should listen to those constraining motives which lead us to recover our lost perfection. But, alas! those powerful inducements would all of them fail if we had not better help. That help we have—all who are true disciples of Christ in this assembly have felt and experienced its effects. They know that the Spirit of God, according to His promise, has taught and enlightened them: they know that that gracious Spirit has led them to Christ according to His own promises: they are well aware that He has suffered their infirmities, assisted them in their duties, strengthened them in their good resolutions, set before them Divine truth in all its power, and made them to feel its force and to yield to it, and thus far they have proceeded towards their advancement to ultimate perfection through His aid. Now the aid which many of us have experienced from on high is guaranteed to us to the end; so that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ accomplishes that change completely, which has already been accomplished imperfectly, in so many, I trust, among you. By this aid that He secures to us, making the truth effectual for our sanctification, subduing temptations, and doing what the world, the flesh and the devil cannot do—that is, imparting right dispositions as well as suggesting right thoughts; by this aid the Spirit of God carries on and eventually completes that moral transformation through which each disciple of Christ will at length be like his Lord. When we "see Him as He is," then "shall we be like Him:" like Him in body, when, by His own sovereign goodness, He gives us a body of immortality "made like unto His own glorious body;" and like Him also in soul, when the work of His grace shall be completed in us.

Since, then, this describes the progress of the whole Christian church towards its ultimate perfection, let us now, for a few moments, consider the effect which it ought to have upon our tempers and our hearts. I rejoice, in addressing you, my brethren, this day, in thinking how many hundreds in this congregation can both comprehend fully, and heartily appreciate, those truths which the Word of God sets before us. It is because you have in a measure experienced them in your own persons that they at once commend themselves to your judgments, and your consciences. And is not all that experience meant, not to satisfy you with the past, but to prompt and encourage you in all your future course; to call you, and a noble calling it is, to become ultimately like

Christ? It is the will of our heavenly Father that we should thus ultimately become like unto Christ. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son." What a calling that is to every one of His people! "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." So that while, on the one hand, it is our obvious duty to aim at it, so it is God's declared purpose to give us success in our efforts; and He will bring every one of His own people to be "conformed to the image of His Son." Again I say, brethren, rest upon it, think of it, carry it to your homes, and never part from it more. You and I are called, whatever our faults are now, to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. It is a glorious pattern; it is a noble character; He blessed the world as He enjoyed the Father's blessing Himself; and you and I are called to be the same, and shall be the same, if we are Christ's followers; because it is His declared purpose respecting us. He does in this what He does in all things, that is, He blesses us when we work for blessings, and prospers all our honest and humble efforts to obtain them. So He calls every Christian here to this glorious work, to go on from day to day into conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ministers and people, elders and deacons, in this congregation, Sunday school teachers and district visitors, poor and rich, experienced Christians and young beginners; you are all setting out on this progress, day by day to part with and to master your remaining faults, till the world can point at you, and say, 'They are Christians because they are like Christ.' That is our calling, always to make progress in it, till the last moment of our mortal existence. Ay, when our faculties fail us, and we are confined to the bed of sickness, or it may be of death, the period of active service passed, and nothing remains for us but to bear the will of God, even then will the transformation grow more rapid and complete even to the last moment, and each of the disciples of Christ in this church shall in the last altering moments of death become like to his Master, ere he soars away to participate in that Master's glory.

Now this we are to attain, as you see, by meditating. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." Suppose you stood before a mirror in which the sun was reflected, and its beams gave radiance to your own form and face; if you left the mirror, the radiance would be lost. And that may suggest to us this truth, that it is only while we continue in the contemplation of Christ our Master that we can hope to have the moral resemblance completed. If we think of Christ in the house of prayer, forgetting Him in the mart of commerce or the workshop; if we think of Christ on the Sabbath, and then forget Him in our intercourse with the world, how can this resemblance grow? But if, day by day, we look at Christ, as He shines in the mirror of the Gospel; if we begin every morning with a serious and solemn contemplation of Christ's love and goodness towards us; if we see what He is whose name we bear, when our minds are fresh morning after morning, and then carry the thought of the Saviour's glorious goodness into all our intercourse with the world, we shall find that it is not so difficult in all the business of life and in all its trials still to be pressing on towards this attainment. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."

And since the unassisted use of the prescribed means would not secure the blessings many of us are aiming at, let us not fail to lay hold day by day of the promised help. And since God the Holy Spirit does help when we are labouring ourselves, and God the Holy Spirit does bless when we humbly seek His blessing; therefore let us begin this day. Let us carry on our religious exercises this day, and begin them to-morrow, and carry them through the next week, and then through the rest of life, looking for the direct promised aid of that great Agent, that gracious Comforter, which is never withheld from us when we seek His influence, and which is able to bless our feeblest exertions in the service of our God. Instead of being content with the amount of Divine influence which has destroyed your enmity to God, which has fixed your opinions for ever, which has settled your habits never to be reversed, instead of being content with that, say to yourselves—let us all say—"God has given me this for the very purpose of rendering my progress all the easier; it is that I may never cease to make progress in this course, till I become like my Saviour and my Lord." May He by His own grace enable each of His children to carry this thought with him through the rest of life, never to part with it more, and to say, 'this is my calling, and the calling of my children, and the calling of my friends, that we should all "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."'

But then, my brethren, just in proportion as we feel that the life to which God has called us is so reasonable, so ennobling, and so peaceful; just in proportion as we feel how great is His mercy in having set our feet in

the road which we mean to continue in as long as we live; in the same proportion ought we to look with the greatest commiseration on those who have never entered in at the strait gate. You know what unconverted thousands there are around you—you know, that their course is just the opposite to the course of the Christian, that beholding in this world innumerable forms of corruption, and innumerable men and women sunk in those corruptions, they are changed into the same image by the force of sympathy and the power of incessant temptation; parting, as they grow in years, even with those few promising fruits which appeared in childhood or in youth; parting, as age stamps its wrinkles upon their brow, and as they approach the wretched termination of their useless course, with everything that had the semblance of what was good; and then, by the power of the god of this world, blinded by the god of this world, who makes them the playthings of his malice and rejoices in the passions they indulge, the prejudices in which they are nourished, and the enmities of their hearts, to make them more and more his miserable and helpless slaves, they go before their God and Judge to account for this, that they trifled with the incomparable goodness of God, that they treated with scorn the most transcendent love the world ever witnessed, that they would not turn to a life which had everything to commend it to a rational being, till becoming worse and worse they were perfected in their resemblance to him whom they chose to serve and with whom they must remain for ever and ever. Now, brethren, you who are Christians know that this is the course of multitudes, alas! in this very city; of multitudes around you, dwelling within a walk of your own doors, with whom you are associated in the work and business of every-day life, and whom you may perhaps call your friends. You see them and converse with them day by day: take care that you do not contract a hard familiarity with their misery; we are so apt, to protect ourselves from unpleasant emotions, to look upon the danger of our fellow men as though it were but trifling. Oh! that by the love of God which has made your hearts so light, your prospects so cheerful, and made you already bless God for your existence as you will bless Him more and more in the end, do imitate Christ in this, by using the opportunities and the faculties which God has given you to lead some of your fellow-sinners to love and serve the same Master with you. How many a soul is lost because a Christian man would not stretch forth the hand of kindness to save him! How many are there in the same workshop, in the same chambers of commerce, and in the same houses of business, who might be saved, if Christians would do their duty! that is, speaking after the manner of men, when God stirs up to the use of the right means. I rejoice in thinking that there are about five hundred of you who are engaged in the work of teaching the poor around you. It is a vast, a blessed host, a regiment in Christ's army with all its colours flying and its uniform on, giving honour to the great Captain of our salvation! But that is not all. Are there not others who are idle? Are there not those who are not so zealous and prayerful as they might be? Let us remember, that if we are instruments in the saving of souls, we raise a trophy of redeeming love which angels rejoice in, and which through eternity will call forth the praises of God. Let us try, then, to save our fellow sinners. Parents, be especially earnest in seeking the early conversion of your children. Brothers and sisters, do not live on without fervent prayer that your brothers and sisters may be brought to Christ. Those who are nearest to us are those to whom we owe our first efforts, and both nature and grace prompt us to endeavour to save them. But amongst those who call upon your sympathies are the remnant of that once favoured nation, who were cast off for their sins, and are only to be recovered by becoming members of the church of Christ.

Now the Society for which I have a few words to say is engaged in that work of endeavouring to overcome the prejudices of the Jew, upon whose heart the veil still hangs, made deeper by the unkindness and neglect of Christians. Many a Jew might long ere this have thrown off his rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ, had not Christians hardened him in that rebellion—at least Christians so-called. Now, brethren, you will, I know, share with those who have been led to enter upon this work, and in part to accomplish it. I doubt not you will love to aid them, especially in this metropolis, in their attempts to remove from the mind of the Jew the veil which education on the one hand, and the natural enmity of the heart to spiritual religion on the other, and very mainly the vices, the unkindnesses, the divisions, and the neglect of Christians, have contributed to thicken. In so doing you will surely have the approbation of that gracious Lord, who is even now watching over His enemies with pity, and who has the same mind towards those who will return to Him that He had when He said of those who drove the nails into His hands and feet—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

May God grant His blessing upon His Word, for Jesus Christ's sake.

CHRISTIAN INVITATION

A Sermon,

REV. JAMES PARSONS.

PREACHED IN THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, STOCKWELL,
ON TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 15, 1849.

"And it shall be, if thou go with us, not, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Numbers x. 32.

THIS language was addressed by the Lawgiver of ancient Israel to a near relative, when engaged in the great work of conducting the chosen people from the bondage of Egypt to the land of promise. The person was "Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law" Raguel being another name for Jethro, of whom we read in the book of Exodus, and Hobab being therefore the brother of her whom Moses had espoused. The circumstances and the occasion of the interview are not recorded; but Moses, under the influence of powerful motives, said, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him" not, as there is reason to conclude, from the influence of unbelief, but from other causes, "I will not go; but I will depart to my own land, and to my kindred." The request, however, was repeated. "He said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." His knowledge of the country through which the travellers were to pass, and of its inhabitants, would be of much service in guiding them to the proper direction of their course. And then comes the impressive argument before us:—"And it shall be, if thou go with us, not, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." Whether the advice was directly followed we are not informed; the probability, however, was that it was so followed: for we find the descendants of Jethro afterwards numbered with the children of Israel in the possession of the promised inheritance.

The language which is now immediately before us is susceptible of interesting applications, in regard to the separate circumstances and well-being of the children of men. In one of those applications we now design to contemplate it—viewing it as being addressed by Christians, under the benevolent impulses arising from their religion, to those by whom the power of that religion has been hitherto unfelt and unacknowledged. In this sense we now intend to regard it, without further preliminary, requesting you to observe, that a position is assumed, that an invitation is presented, and that an assurance is pledged. And this, while addressing itself to the attention of all, is especially urged upon the serious and devout regard of those who have been hitherto halting, or resisting the claims of piety, that they also may become rightly and savingly resolved.

I. You will observe, in the first place, that a position is assumed.

It was assumed by Moses, that the people of whom he had the care occupied a position, in regard to God and in regard to their own welfare, which was essentially favourable, and in which it was eminently desirable to participate. The same truth must be assumed by and in regard to Christians: those who live under the economy of new covenant mercy. And this will be vindicated by observing, that Christians live in the actual enjoyment of Divine favour, and that they possess the prospect of invaluable blessing in the future.

1. You will observe, that Christians actually live in the enjoyment of the Divine favour. The tokens of the Divine favour were especially manifest in regard to those respecting whom the words before us were pronounced. God

had "borne them as on eagles' wings," and brought them to Himself, as His peculiar treasure above all people; He had redeemed them from the hand of the enemy; His purpose was, that He might bring them and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance; He had led them forth and guided them by His strength and wisdom; "He had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither had He seen perverseness in Israel;" "the Lord their God was with them, and the shout of a king was among them;" "surely there was no enchantment against Jacob, neither was there any divination against Israel." They were "the people whom the Lord had blessed." The position in this manner indicated, with regard to the ancient tribes, well indicates the position occupied by those who are known under the designation of Christians. Of them the tribes of Judah were the typical representatives; and whatever, therefore, was pronounced of them now possesses a meaning enhanced in its signification and in its value. Christians have been separated from the world by an effectual vocation; they have been "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins;" their transgressions are blotted out of the book of Divine remembrance, to be brought in the records of condemnation against them no more for ever; they live in a state of constant justification and acceptance in the presence of the Most High; they are adopted into His family as His children, entitled in all things to address Him as their Father; they are supplied by His bounty, they are guided by His care, they are protected by His power; in the exercise of His bounty, of His care and of His power, He never leaves them and He never forsakes them—rendering the entire universe but the minister of their security and of their happiness. Here, my brethren, then, is a state exalted and honourable indeed—a state in comparison of which worldly wealth, and worldly honour, and worldly majesty, in their highest concentrations, must be regarded but as meanness and as beggary, and a state which within the range of human nature remains unchangeable and alone. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon them!"

2. Again, you observe, that while Christians live in the actual enjoyment of the Divine favour, they possess the prospect of invaluable blessings in the future. Moses states his anticipation in the verse before us, that God would still do good unto the children of Israel; as in the preceding verse he says—"We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." They were to continue under His preserving providence and superintendence, until the high destiny which had been appointed for them should be accomplished, and they should pass the boundary of their pilgrimage into the land which had been promised to their fathers, where they were to abide in rest and in renown for ever. The anticipation which was thus indulged suggests, although of course it cannot equal, the privileges and the prospects which are placed before Christians as the consummation of their bliss, as arranged in the riches of Divine grace. Truly, brethren, good has yet to be performed towards all those by whom the Christian life is possessed. Their death is after all sweetened by balmy consolation, and over its terrors they are to achieve a certain victory, and enter into a higher state, where they shall possess perfect peace and rest and purity and joy. Others, estranged from their character, are in death to be abandoned and defenceless—then to endure agitation, and anguish, and trouble, and unmitigable woe; but they, in their countless hosts, are to be welcomed and accepted before the throne of the Eternal, and they are to abide with Him in the mansions of His own bliss and splendour, inheriting all things unchangeably, unreservedly and for ever. Peruse and ponder at your leisure the varied developments which are rendered in the revelation of new covenant mercy concerning this home of the redeemed; and when you have endeavoured to estimate and appreciate them as they deserve, in their lovely or in their dazzling features, then pronounce us the heirs of that immortal portion—of whatever intelligent nature, in its most soaring aspirations, can pant for or can admire. "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." And, brethren, it would be well for us to remember and briefly to consider, that happiness is alone with them. Here, then, is the position which is assumed, with regard to the antitype of the ancient tribes: they live in the actual enjoyment of the Divine favour, and they possess the prospect of invaluable blessing in the future.

II. Again, secondly, you will observe, that an invitation is presented.

Moses offered the invitation to his relative that he would go with them, and thus be the companion of their course; as in the preceding verse he says—"Come thou with us, and we will do thee good;" "Leave us not, I pray thee." The invitation, we repeat, is presented, in a sense answering to the spirit of their vocation, by Christians to men who hitherto have been living apart, as votaries of sin and of the world. The religion of Christians has provided for them the invitation and the means of enforcing it especially through the instrumentality of the Christian ministry, the labourers in which were appointed by Christ before He ascended into heaven, that they might be the means of advocating His cause and of advancing His triumphs. Nor is there any Christian who must not take the opportunity of himself reiterating the appeal. I, as a Christian minister among you to-night, to whom therefore is committed a solemn responsibility in regard to your immortal souls, endeavour to present the invitation to those among you who are in the hesitating and doubtful state we have described; and I am confident that there are many hearts which will warmly second the appeal, and desire for it an enlarged and an abundant success. In the name of Christians, then, and speaking now to those who have not yet avowed themselves to be Christians, our exhortation will resolve itself as follows:—we invite you to embrace their principles, to associate with their communities, and to engage in their employments.

1. In the name of Christians we say, we invite you to believe, their principles. There are certain great principles, as there were in the case directly and literally before us, the cordial embrace of which is essential, that there may be a sincere and a vital participation with them. Those principles, my brethren, relate not merely to the elementary truths concerning the being, the government and the attributes of God; they relate to the Divine character and mission of Him whose name we bear, Christ Jesus, the Son of God; they relate to the expiatory sacrifice He has offered for human sin, by expiring upon the cross; they relate to the imputation of the merit and righteousness embodied in that sacrifice, through faith, as the only efficacious cause of justification and acceptance before the Father; they relate to the agency of the Holy Spirit, in His renewing grace, as requisite to apply the work of mediation to the human soul; and they relate to the duty of obedience and holiness, as the only satisfactory proof of an interest in the work of redemption and of the hope which that redemption is intended to inspire and to secure. Now these various principles are to be sincerely and cordially believed; their presence or absence decides the character and the prospects of men for ever. "He that believeth in the Son shall not come into condemnation; but he that believeth not the Son is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "He that believeth hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but he that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." When, then, we desire of men that they will assume the position and pursue the course we have stated to be so delightful, we do at the outset desire of them that they will believe—giving to our principles a cordial embrace from their hearts, and enshrining them in those hearts amidst elements which will not permit them to be seduced or to be torn away. Then, brethren, believe; and be satisfied only when you can announce—"I believe, and I know whom I have believed;" and remember, that when you have believed, the midnight has passed away from the soul, and the dawning of the glorious day has begun.

2. Again: while we invite you, on behalf of Christians, that you will embrace their principles, we invite you also that you will associate with their communities. You will observe that the invitation of the Lawgiver to his relative implied the necessity of visible association with the people of God; he was to unite in public companionship with them, in the course which they were directed to pursue. Now the same necessity is also implied in the invitation uttered by Christians under the new economy to those who are around them. You are to consort with them in fellowship and in manifestation, in whatever modes have been specified and appointed for that purpose. Association, my hearers, is to be sought in personal friendship; it is to be sought in domestic connection; it is to be sought in the services of the

sanctuary ; and it is to be sought especially by union with those communities designated by the name of churches, and composed of those who having already rendered themselves to the Lord, have rendered themselves also to each other, according to His will. These latter were instituted by the Divine Founder of our religion Himself ; and when we read the record of their religion and of their progress in apostolic ages, we find at once their sanction, their constitution, their design of continued existence, their high importance, and the duty incumbent upon all who have believed the truth to unite and to combine with them, as they exist throughout the successive generations of time. It is as a matter of duty that we press this deportment upon yourselves. A Christian community, after the model of apostolic times, exists in connection with this place ; and similar communities exist in sanctuaries erected in the vicinity around you. Wherever, my brethren, your conscientious preferences have been exercised and have been matured, there it is your obligation to unite with some one of those communities, regarded by you, according to those convictions, as answering to the pattern presented in the records of inspiration. And thus it is that we invite you to "come with us," and be our fellow-pilgrims in our ordinances and in our worship, even unto the end. There may be, my hearers, especially to some, but little in any community of the nature to which we have now adverted, calculated to excite or to indulge the appetite after worldly gain, and worldly rank, and worldly distinction and honour ; but consider how we are identified with others—that we are connected with a vast corporate body, of which the Lord Jesus Christ, the all-glorious Redeemer, is the Head, which numbers among it holy angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect," which is destined to attain conquest and to wield empire and dominion over the universe, and which finally, in all the parts composing it, shall be enthroned in the majesty of the skies. Then answer to the call which summons you ; and let it be the song of many a heart hitherto held back, and of many a tongue hitherto silent—

" Oh ! may I see Thy tribes rejoice,
And aid their triumphs with my voice ;
This is my glory, Lord, to be
Joined to Thy saints, and near to Thee."

It is thus we invite you, while you believe our principles, to associate with our communities.

3. Again : we also invite you in the name of Christians, that you will engage in their employments. You have already observed from our reading of the narrative, that the anticipation of the Lawgiver of Israel was, that by the junction of his relative with them, he would be the instrument of conveying much of important and delightful advantage : "Thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." He not only was to receive the employment of personal privilege, but was to impart momentous assistance to others. We are aware that in the various combinations which are formed by men of a social nature, for the purpose of advancing what they conceive in their sphere to be important designs, they never invite men to unite with them, excepting upon the principle of reciprocal benefit—benefit to be received, but at the same time benefit to be imparted and to be bestowed ; and the same rule properly and legitimately applies to the invitation offered by Christian men that others will unite with them. They do it under the expectation that they shall receive assistance in the advancement of objects to which they have been set apart by their vocation, and which are essentially and justly dear to their hearts. Those objects are, the advancement of the glory of their God and Saviour, in the conversion of the children of men throughout our native country and throughout the world. Means have been established by the authority of our Divine Master, for the purpose of accomplishing this grand and wonderful consummation—the means being, the faithful dissemination of "the truth as it is in Jesus," accompanied with fervent and importunate prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency, promised according to the covenant, that dissemination of the truth can alone be effectual and successful. Now, brethren, we ask you to unite with us, not merely that you may sit at the banquet and enjoy the privileges and the high immunities of our religion, but that you may cordially and diligently cooperate in the promotion of our objects and of our aims. There is reason for much anxiety in the age in which we live, that

those who become professors of the Gospel, assuming the Christian name and wearing the Christian badge, will really fulfil the obligations which in this manner are incumbent upon them. I appeal, my brethren, to the resources which are now placed at the disposal of the Christian church--resources which in their amount and value are perhaps unparalleled since apostolic times, if indeed they were equalled even then; I appeal to the facilities for the intercourse of mind with mind, and for the attainment of influence by mind over mind. I appeal to the wonderful openings which have been presented in Divine Providence for the advancement of Divine truth in spheres from which hitherto it has been utterly and entirely excluded; I appeal to the activity of evil men in promoting the principles of infidelity, on the one hand, or of gross and prostrating superstition on the other; I appeal to the convulsions which are now agitating to their very foundations so many of the nations of the earth, manifestly the heralds in the administration of Divine Providence for events impregnated with vast results, and embodying the welfare of the future; and I appeal to the hopes which have been inspired in the breasts of sincere Christians, as to the advent of a new and brighter era upon our apostate and long-disordered world. Who among us can contemplate these things, as belonging to the signs of the times, and not see how imperative and how unutterably solemn is the invocation of true Christians to come to the help of God and to the help of man "against the mighty!" Now understand, you who have been hitherto, partially at least, overlooked in your aspect and in your state--when we ask you to come with us, we ask you to come that you may assist us in the grand achievements which are before us, and that in the work which has been given to us you will be found faithful unto death, so as to be entitled to the crown of life. You who are in mature age, come and make amends for the divisions and for the indolence of the past; you who are yet in younger years, rising into life, come and consecrate the morning of your days to the best and to the holiest of causes, knowing that the time is not far distant when all the employments which would attract and absorb and exhaust you shall be found utterly mean and unworthy, and the employments in which Christians engage shall be found to have comprehended within them whatever is grand and noble in relation to God and man, time and eternity, earth and heaven. Here is our invitation, in its emphatic plenitude, to embrace our principles, to associate with our communities, and to engage in our employments.

III. We now proceed to observe, thirdly, that an assurance is pledged.

The emphasis of the expressions before us will be found singularly powerful and interesting. "It shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." And this assurance may be taken in two departments. There is an assurance from Christians, and there is an assurance by Christians, for their God.

I. Observe, Christians pledge the assurance for themselves, that to those who go with them they will render all the assistance in their power. "What goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." "We will endeavour to render you participators of all our supports and enjoyments, so that you shall be found entirely as we are, both in the possessions of the present and in the prospects of the future." If, brethren, on the present occasion, we were to address ourselves especially and at large as to the obligation of Christians, we would state how needful it is in the present times to overcome that spirit of partisanship and of caste, which from varied circumstances has erected so many barriers to free intercourse between heart and heart, in promoting the benefit and the advantage of all, and we ought, no matter what may be the rank, or what may have been the previous character of those who desire to unite themselves with our communities and to our companions in the way to heaven, we ought to resolve, in a spirit of the most cordial Christian liberality, to welcome them to our souls and in our efforts. There is a beautiful example presented in one of the early records of Christianity, how our Divine Master, when prejudices might perhaps have reasonably been preserved and retained for a lengthened period in many minds, caused those prejudices in this manner to be entirely and absolutely overcome. It is the instance which is given to us in regard to the conversion of the great persecutor of the church, Saul of Tarsus. When his memorable conversion had been accomplished, we are informed that the Lord came in vision to Ananias, one of those who doubt

less was trembling in the prospect of persecution and of death ; and the Lord said unto him, " Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus : for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem ; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way ; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel : for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house ; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." The same difficulties, existing in the church of Jerusalem, were in the same manner overcome. " He came to Jerusalem, and assayed to join himself to the disciples ; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem." Whenever, brethren, a conversion is well accredited, no matter what the circumstances and previous history of him on whom the magic transformation is come, let him be received and associated with us as a brother. And endeavouring to act out these principles, my hearers whom we have invited, rely upon it, that true Christians will assist you by their instructions—they will endeavour to impart to you the knowledge which they themselves have acquired of the mysteries of religion ; and they will lead you into the deep things of God : so that you may understand and comprehend with them " the breadth, and length, the depth and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God." They will assist you by their sympathies ; in your perplexities they will guide you, in your temptations they will help you, in your conflicts they will protect you, in your distresses they will console you ; and you will find the beautiful reality of what the apostle stated respecting the Christian church—" Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or whether one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it." They will assist you by their prayers, in the sanctuary, in the social circle, in the retirement of the closet : intercessions will ascend for you, that you may be preserved and that you may grow and advance to Christian maturity and perfection ; and though you know it not, these agencies will constantly work for your benefit, strengthening you and causing you to press onwards in honour and in usefulness, until you and those to whom you have been indebted shall become companions in the security and in the felicity of a far higher world. We offer you our pledge -we (the ministers of religion, your pastors among whom you are now listening to the Word of life,) will perform what we can : and there is no Christian man, and there is no Christian woman, who will not be, in the beautiful expressions of inspiration, your " fellowhelper in the truth." " It shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."

2. And then again, you observe, Christians pledge the assurance for God. We believe, brethren, that the moment when your decision occurs will be the moment of your ample and unreserved introduction to all the immunities of the Christian life. There is no process of discipline or preparatory trial, there is no hesitation and there is no delay ; the moment when your faith is placed on the great Messiah, and when the resolution of your heart under Divine grace is taken, to devote yourselves to His honour, at that moment all that Christianity can vouchsafe to you is, from the Source of Christianity your own. Brethren, doubt not this for an instant of time. The God of Christianity has promised it ; and from our own history we can fully assure to you the enjoyment of its ample and unreserved blessings for yourselves. As soon as you are found by the side of the altar, laying your hand upon the memorials of the Victim who was once offered upon it for sin, dying for our offences and rising again for our justification, at that moment the angel-spirit comes with the charter of privilege, and he unrolls it before you, and announces that it is your own. " All things are yours : whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,

or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are your's ; and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's." This, brethren, is the Christian charter—the charter which is given to every one who believes, and the charter which shall ere long become the birthright and the inheritance of mankind. And then beyond the possessions and privileges of the present, there are glorious things to be accomplished in the seasons that are yet to come. You will pass on with the redeemed people of God through their pilgrimage, shadowed by the pillar of cloud by day, and shielded by the pillar of fire by night, until you come to the appointed close ; and stand upon the boundary stream that separates the probation from the reward. You may perhaps shudder as you approach that mystic flood, and tremble as first your foot is placed in the cold and chilling water ; but there will be found with you One who hath promised—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee ;" and He, bearing the ark of the covenant, will pass on before you, causing the stream to flow hither and thither, that you may pass peacefully and safely over ; and then, after the mysterious darkness and gloom, shall your foot stand firm upon the inheritance of the redeemed, to be welcomed by angel spirits and conducted by them into the heaven which has been "prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." There shall you be brought into the immediate presence of Him who has ransomed you ; "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of water ; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes ;" you shall see His face ; His name shall be in your forehead ; the Lord God will give you light ; there shall be neither night nor thirst ; and you shall reign for ever and ever. You will have "received the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Here is our pledge ; "and whatever goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto you."

My dear brethren, in our illustrations of the interesting portion of Scripture before you, we have occupied your attention designedly with matters distinct and plain. None among you, I trust, are able to say that you have mistaken or that you have not understood. You have seen how we, the antitypes of the ancient tribes of Israel, are now living in the actual enjoyment of the Divine favour, with the prospect of invaluable blessing in the future. We have invited you, from those principles of benevolence which are essentially inspired in our hearts by the genius of our religion, that you will embrace our principles, that you will associate with our communities, and that you will engage in our employments—so that fully and entirely you may be one with us ; and we pledge the assurance for ourselves, that to all who go with us we will render whatever assistance may be in our power—the assistance of our instructions, of our sympathies and of our prayers ; and we pledge ourselves for God, that to those who go with us He will render an immediate and an unreserved communication of spiritual privilege and happiness. Is this record true ? Then can there be, on the part of any one present, a hesitancy or doubtfulness of mind, as to the course to be pursued ? "It shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."

Christian brethren and sisters, let me ask you, in conducting this address to its conclusion, that you will endeavour to consider the obligation which is placed upon you, to carry out in practice the spirit of the invitation which on your behalf has been presented. We have great reason to fear, from the aspect of religious profession in various parts of our country—and perhaps this place and vicinity must be regarded as constituting no exception—we have reason to fear that there is, from various causes, an inadequate degree of attention rendered to the mode of deportment which now has been commended and enforced. Have you not oftentimes been indolent, when you ought to have been active ? Have you not oftentimes been silent, when you ought to have spoken ? Have you not oftentimes been careless, when you ought to have been earnest and inspired ? What a field is there around you to offer the invitation to others, that they may receive your privileges and finally participate in your salvation ! Look into your own habitations—are there none there to whom the invitation with tenderness and with solemnity should be addressed ?—a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, a brother or a sister ?—and are the springs of your affection so utterly frozen, that nothing from your lips can be offered, by which they may be attracted to the scene of enjoyment,

of security and of saving mercy? Look around you, in your neighbourhood—the multitudes with whom you mingle in domestic and in social life, to whom also the invitation should be uttered: where is your friendship, and where is the larger principle of benevolence? Oh! brethren, that we could but arise individually to the performance of our work! Let us attempt it in future with greater courage and greater perseverance than ever; and let us at least have this to announce, when we shall stand before the heart-searching scrutiny of the last day, that even there we can appeal to Him who sitteth upon the throne, that we are “pure from the blood of all men.”

And then, my hearers, you to whom many invitations and addresses have been presented in vain! it is probable that in this audience there are not a few whose consciences ought now deeply and painfully to sting them. Here are some, who have long sat under the sound of a faithful ministry; and you have heard adjurations from the pulpit, carried into the intercourse of social life, beseeching you that you would not “receive the grace of God in vain.” And yet it has been in vain; and under the services of the sanctuary you have been but “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Here, again, are others, who have had the advantages of pious instruction in the homes of the holy and devoted. You have heard the voice of a father’s authority and of a mother’s tenderness; you have seen the tear, and you have heard the sigh, and you have known the wrestling and the agonising supplication for you; and that father or that mother can perhaps speak no more; they have gone to their reward; and their last efforts and yearnings were for you; and yet they have been in vain! My hearers, whatever your past privileges have been, however resisted and however refused, let me ask you not to resist and not to reject the appeal which in behalf of the living and the dead is presented to you from the pulpit to-night. We ask you, we implore you to “come with us”—that you may be free, that you may be privileged, and that you may be saved. If you still refuse, remember that your course will pass steadily onwards, until you too shall come to the boundary-stream, and by the hand of restless destiny be compelled to plunge, but without a friend, a helper, or a guide. And when you shall be hurled upon the further side, it will not be on the fair, and fertile and ever-beautiful inheritance that fadeth not away—it will be on the wild and desert and blasted heath, where no shelter is against “the peltings of the pitiless storm” that rapidly rises in its frowning horrors to overwhelm and to destroy; but where

“Tempests of angry fire shall rise,
To blast the rebel worm;
And beat upon his naked soul
In one eternal storm.”

And what aggravated agony in these realms of perdition will it be, that there was a method of salvation that was resisted and wilfully trampled under foot—that it was your choice to be lost, and not your choice to be saved; and that he who endures the second death has been a self-murderer, and that he has committed suicide upon his soul!

The alternative is thus before you: life and death—blessing and cursing—good and evil: choose *you*! In the name of ministers and Christians present, we leave with you the language of our text; and God grant that neither the language nor the spirit of it may be forgotten—“If thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.” Now come—now resolve—now decide; now enter the portals of the temple, where are the inspirations of liberty, and peace and Christian joy—now enter, and be happy!

“ALL TAUGHT OF GOD.”

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. H. HUTTON, M.A.,

Rector of Covent Garden, and Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Bedford.

PREDICATED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. PAUL, COVENT GARDEN,
AT THE VISITATION OF THE VEN. THE ARCHDEACON OF MIDDLESEX,
ON THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1849.

“It is written in the prophets, *And they shall be all taught of God.*” John vi. 45.

THE passage most closely according with these words of the great Teacher will be found in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. The prophet is there describing the glories of the church under the Gospel dispensation. He compares it to a magnificent temple, whose foundations and walls were composed of the richest and rarest gems; and then, in reference to the peculiar privileges of the worshippers in this glorious sanctuary, the gracious promise is recorded—“and all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah, and great shall be the peace of thy children.” Under the former dispensation, indeed, the same blessing had, to a limited extent, been vouchsafed from on high. Moses and Samuel and David and the other prophets were, assuredly, “all taught of God.” These “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” But after the resurrection and glorification of Christ the manifold gifts of the Spirit were dispensed from above in far more abundant supplies. The difference between the outpouring of the Spirit *before* and *after* the atoning work of Jesus was like the difference between the parched and thirsty soil in the drought of summer, upon which only the first large drops of the shower have descended, and the same soil after it has long enjoyed the refreshing and reviving influences of “the early and the latter rains;”—or, it may be compared to the difference between some little stream in the sultry East which only just keeps alive the green turf upon its banks, and the mighty river, which, like the Nile, by its periodical overflowings, carries verdure and beauty and fertility to whole districts and countries. And so in regard to the church in the times of the Messiah—the children of the kingdom had, in some degree, in every age, been “taught of God;” but, under the Gospel, this was to be the case to an extent wholly unprecedented in the previous history of the church. The Lord Jesus Christ was to appear in the fulness of time and to give His life a ransom for many; and, after purging our sins, to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as our all-prevailing Advocate with the Father; and the immediate fruits of these intercessions of the God-Saviour were to be the outpouring of the plenary influences of the Holy Ghost—the great Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter of the church. And thus looking forward to the privileged condition of the people of God in those “last days,” it could be truly affirmed in a sense

in which it had never been before the case—"and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

If, then, we have rightly developed the mind of the Spirit in this passage, the promise which it contains belongs to the whole church under the present dispensation: it "belongs to us and to our children, and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" to the saving knowledge of His truth.

But in selecting the words for meditation upon the present occasion we propose to assign to them a more limited application. The promise, as just observed, belongs to the whole church: but we shall principally consider it in its reference and application to the ministers and stewards of God's mysteries. The Divine teaching which Isaiah's words, as cited by our Lord, warrant us to expect, as a blessing to be vouchsafed to the church at large, under the Gospel dispensation, may assuredly be regarded as a blessing to be peculiarly and especially realized by the PASTORS and TEACHERS of that church; and therefore it will be to you, my brethren in the ministry, that I shall humbly endeavour to apply the passage. Standing as I am in the presence of so many, in every respect more qualified to teach, I do not presume to hope that I shall be able to accomplish more than simply and affectionately "to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance," in regard to some of those more prominent and fundamental tenets of Gospel truth, with which we have all been conversant from the beginning.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." I propose to advert to some of those circumstances and situations peculiar to the Christian ministry, in which this Divine teaching must prove of such unspeakable moment to us. And let us address our earnest supplications to Heaven, that our meditations may be acceptable to our God and Father through Jesus Christ our strength and our Redeemer, and that the result of those meditations may be that holy and godly edifying, which will afford the surest proof that we shall have received, this morning, that Divine teaching, of which we are about to speak.

I. This teaching of God must be accounted an indispensable qualification for our holy office.

It was one of the Lord's serious charges against the unaccredited teachers in the Jewish church—"I have not sent these prophets, yet they run,—I have not spoken unto them, and yet they prophesy." And the passage will as properly apply to the Christian minister now, as to the Hebrew priest or prophet of old. No man ought to "take this honour unto himself, save he that is called of God." "Our ministry"—it is the striking testimony of an old writer—"is Divine in its foundation and institution, although human in the channel and way of its communication." And Luther in his usual bold and emphatic language exhorts every probationer for the ministry to wait for the Divine call, and without it, even if he had the wisdom of Daniel or Solomon, to dread taking upon himself the office, as he would dread the flames of hell. And similar sentiments are frequent in the writings of Hooker, and other eminent divines, whose praise is in all the churches. "None but He who made the world," (exclaimed one of the most able and successful of our clergy in the last century,) "can make a minister of the Gospel;" and he added—"if a man have the natural capacity, culture and application may render him a scholar, or a

philosopher, or an orator; but a true minister of Christ must have certain principles, motives, feelings and aims, which no industry or endeavour of man can either acquire or communicate." And how exactly these opinions accord with the doctrine and practice of our apostolic church, must be apparent from the course which she adopts in the ordination of her ministers. The moral fitness of the candidate for holy orders is first duly investigated: and this preliminary question having been satisfactorily settled, his mental qualifications and endowments are next carefully and closely examined into. But this is not all. And even where there are the spotless life and reputation, and the powerful intellect and the cultivated mind, the church will seek to impose an insurmountable barrier to a man's entering into the holy office, unless he can give evidence of a still *higher* qualification for the work. Most solemn was that inquiry to which each of us had to reply before the dispensation of the Gospel was committed to us. "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration, and to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?" To which the answer deliberately returned by each of us was,—*"I trust so."* *"Certainly,"* it is the remark of Bishop Burnet in his admirable work upon the Pastoral Care, *"the reply to this question ought to be well considered; for, if any man say, 'I trust so,' who yet knows nothing of any such spiritual motions, he makes his first approach to the altar with a lie upon his lips, and that not unto men, but unto God."*

This, then, is the first use which we would make of the passage before us. *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God."* This teaching of God, consequent upon, and closely connected with, the calling of God must be viewed as our primary and chief qualification for our office. Human learning may undoubtedly prove a valuable and powerful auxiliary in our work. It is the just and eloquent panegyric bestowed upon a late eminent Scotch divine, that *"in his writings all the sciences are to be seen as the handmaids of religion, approaching the Temple of Eternal Truth, and spreading new embroideries upon her shrines, and laying their most precious treasures upon her altars."* Astronomy, in his pages, owned all her splendours borrowed from the Sun of righteousness: Geology emptied her deepest mines at his bidding, and presented her most precious metal and gems, as dim reflections of His glory: Botany wove around the Cross her amaranthine garlands, and Newton came from his starry home, Linnæus from his flowery bed, and Werner from his subterranean cave, to acknowledge that all that they had elicited, in their several provinces, had only served to show more clearly that *Jesus is enthroned upon the riches of the universe, and that the voice of Christianity is the voice of God."* The great day will alone reveal all the important services rendered to the cause of Truth by the very few in any generation, who can bring to the service of the sanctuary intellectual endowments of this high order: but still, far, far before all other knowledge must be ranked that knowledge which God alone can impart to the soul. And although in the enlightened age in which our lot has been cast, the study of every branch of learning and science may be made eminently serviceable in our great work of *"ministering holy things to immortal souls,"* at the same time never must we forget that however proficient in every department of secular learning, still nothing must be deemed of sufficient importance to compensate for the absence of that Divine teaching, of which our blessed Lord speaks in the text; and, therefore, we would have

the well-known aphorism of one of the old Fathers, graven upon the hearts of all our youth, preparing for the ministry—" *Utilis lectio—utilis eruditio,—sed magis necessaria UNCTIO, quippe quæ docet de omnibus.*"

II. But next, this Divine teaching is necessary *in order to produce agreement and unity in our ministry.*

It would be fruitless to attempt to disguise the fact, which the history of the last few years palpably and painfully demonstrates, that differences exist amongst us,—differences not merely in matters of trivial and subordinate importance, such as touching the colour of a vestment, or the form of a lectern, or the position of a font ; but, alas ! differences in regard to some of the most essential tenets of God's Word,—differences, for example, respecting the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures, respecting the doctrines of human corruption, and justification by faith, and the degree of prominence to be given in our preaching to the doctrine of the atonement ; and, above all, differences concerning the efficacy of the Christian sacraments.

The evils arising from our disputes in these matters are manifold. In not a few instances they have led, and are still leading, to actual secessions from the church ; and we are at this hour mourning over the departure of too many, who have gone, some towards Geneva,—but many more towards Rome. We must think and speak of such in sorrow, not in anger. We must mourn their departure, chiefly on their own account. And we ought to pray that they may yet be led to return to our Ark, after they have long winged their flight over the wide waste of dark and troubled waters, but, like the dove, have found no rest for the sole of the weary foot.

But the injurious effects of our divisions are not confined to those who have actually crossed the fatal Rubicon, and are gone out from us. Would God it had been so ! Amongst those who still abide in our communion the minds of not a few of the younger and weaker brethren have been sorely perplexed and harassed by these dissensions. In others, again, feelings of bitterness and animosity have been engendered, alike prejudicial to growth in personal holiness, and to success in the ministerial work ;—while, pervading our whole ecclesiastical system and policy, every close and anxious observer must discover too many indubitable evidences of a want of unity in purpose and in act. Brother too often distrusts brother ; friend is estranged from friend—and, as in the plans and movements of a disorganized army, the common foe is not slow to discover, and to take advantage of, this our unhappy disunion. And thus the safety of the holy citadel confided to our care must be inevitably endangered, when we, its defenders, instead of being leagued together, hand and heart, are seen wasting our precious hours, and exhausting our energies and resources in intestine feuds and jealousies.

But where is the remedy for the evil which all discover and all deplore ? Our experience must too closely attest that it is not to be found in any laws or provisions which the wisdom or the piety of men can devise. We have our ARTICLES, so fully and explicitly defining and expounding all the great truths of the Gospel. We have our HOMILIES as a further help to the development of the opinions of the revered Fathers and Confessors of our Church ; and we have our incomparable LITURGY, in which the doctrinal sentiments propounded in our Articles and Homilies seem to animate and to inspire each devout expression of prayer and praise with which our holy mother teaches us to draw near to the

Mercy-seat. And yet, with all these aids to unity our *want* of unity is at once our sorrow, and our reproach. But where, it will be again demanded, is the remedy? Not, as we have already affirmed, in these the accredited formularies of our church; and not, we are bound to record our conviction, not in any authoritative exposition of these formularies which passing events may elicit from our Ecclesiastical Courts or rulers—not, in fact, in any provision of man. No, all human remedies here will accomplish no more than the sprinkling of the salt upon the bosom of the stream, and they can never avail to apply the healing properties to the *sources* of the waters. But "with God all things are possible;" and let but the promise of the text be fulfilled to us as a church; let the bright and happy hour dawn upon our beloved Zion, when it can be affirmed of the whole body of her prelates and pastors—"they shall be all taught of God;" and the result will be at once a complete unity of sentiment and thought and feeling, in regard to all the momentous doctrines of God's Word. The "other Gospel" shall then be heard no more in our temples. What has been truly characterised as the "icy morality of Plato and Seneca" shall universally give place to a system of instruction far more calculated to affect, to impress, and to benefit the hearts of men; there shall be no longer any "reserve" in our preaching of the Atonement, but Christ shall be "all in all" in our ministrations; and in every pulpit, throughout the length and breadth of the land, there shall be the same uniform, consistent, simple, full, and clear pointing to His blood, as the only effectual sacrifice—to His righteousness, as the only availing covering for sin—to His intercessions, as the only procuring cause of the dispensation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost;—and to His name, as "the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved." Let our prayers, then, for *unity* in the church be accompanied with our prayers that we may be "all taught of God;"—for it is thus alone that the oil of heavenly peace can ever be poured out upon the angry waves of strife and controversy, and thus alone that we may henceforth hope to be "all of one heart and one soul—united in one holy bond of truth and peace, and faith and charity—and in one mind, and with one mouth, to be able to glorify our God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. But we proceed to speak of another important end to be accomplished by this Divine teaching. We require it *for our support and comfort in our ministerial labours.*

We have difficulties of no common character to contend with. In the ordinary metropolitan parish, for instance, how peculiar is the position of the clergyman in the present day! What a large proportion of his flock must there be, which he can seldom or never hope to meet except in the house of prayer! Once every week, at the most, are they drawn within the sound of our teaching; and how to say a word in season to every description of hearer; how to adapt the short discourse to the almost endless variety of character with which we are thrown in contact; how to come home to every man's business and bosom, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine; how to convince the sceptic, to awaken the indifferent, to reclaim the fallen, to impress the thoughtless, and to encourage the feeble-minded; how to feed the "babes in Christ" with "the sincere milk of the Word," and yet not to withhold the "strong meat" required by the more matured and advanced believers—oh! we may well exclaim with the great apostle—"who is sufficient for these

things?" And who of us has not been at times almost overwhelmed by the contemplation of the difficulties of such a work, contrasting the feebleness and imperfections of the instrumentality which alone we can bring to our aid, with the magnitude and vastness of the ends and objects proposed to be effected? And where, at such seasons, the support, and where the consolation of the drooping spirit, but here, in some such exceeding great and precious promise as that which is contained in the text—"it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God?" I look around me upon those living masses, and I feel that my poor efforts to promote their spiritual weal must, in themselves, be as utterly powerless, as the address of the old Saxon monarch to the troubled waters, which were dashing around his seat—but I remember the supernatural power which went with the appeals of Ezekiel in the valley of the dry bones: I remember that the "grace" which was "sufficient" for him will be sufficient for me; I remember, that while the Hebrew prophet spake, the breath of life returned to those dry bones, and that my Bible does not forbid the hope that the same blessed result may flow from my poor unworthy efforts to proclaim the glad tidings of redemption in the ears of dead sinners, and that the "arm of Jehovah is not now shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear"—and all that I require is but to be assured of this one point, that I am "taught by God," and that I have His authority and commission, and presence and blessing in the work, for then I may banish all unbelieving doubts and fears, and wait in patience, leaving the result in His hands, ever hoping, ever praying, ever believing, that "His Word shall not return to Him void," and that "my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." And in truth the same consolation will be indispensable throughout the whole course of our work. In the newly-formed district, for example, where the neglected population are only very slowly learning to appreciate the blessings of the means of grace—where but a few worshippers as yet assemble in the church, and the table of the Lord is almost neglected, and even in the schools no fruits of the Christian instruction imparted are yet apparent, and the "many days" have come and gone, and yet the "bread cast upon the waters" is *not* "found"—the pastor sad and disheartened goes his daily rounds, but can trace no good resulting from all his self-denying labours; the lawless, reckless, godless throng around him are, to all appearance, just what they were years and years ago, and he returns to his home at the close of his day's toil to brood over the blight and failure of all his long and fondly cherished hopes. And amidst the continued pressure of such trials and struggles as these, oh! *where* can the man of God seek rest; where can his eye discern one solitary gleam of hope in the dark vista of the future—unless it be in taking home to his aching bosom some such promise, as that in the text; and in long and fervently praying over it, that it may be fulfilled to himself and to his people—"it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God?"

IV. But there is yet a view of the subject upon which we must crave permission to offer a few brief words of comment. This Divine teaching is *indispensable to the success of our ministrations.*

A spirit of love, meekness, and gentleness, and a heart overflowing with devotedness and zeal will be invaluable in the Christian pastor; and yet it is not to such a spirit or to such a heart that any *success* in the work, can, properly speaking, be attributed. Like the disciples, we may toil all the night.

and yet take nothing. Our labours, in themselves, will be as insufficient to accomplish any blessed effects, as the trumpets of the priests in Joshua's army were to make any breach upon the massive walls and bulwarks of Jericho—"Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." We are expressly assured that it must be "*given*" unto men to "believe"—(given unto them from above): and it was the Lord who "opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things spoken by Paul;" it was the Lord who "added to the church daily such as should be saved." Oh! that this solemn reflection may be present to our minds in every scene of our labours! whether it be in the study, in the preparation of the weekly discourses, or while kneeling and praying beside the sick bed, or in the visit to the abodes of sickness, poverty, and vice, or in the school, endeavouring to impress the youthful mind—never let us forget that "the excellency of the power must be of God, and not of us"—all depending upon His grace teaching our lips to speak, and opening the hearts of our people to feel. "No man," wrote a great divine of a former age, "ever supposed that the strewing of a dead body with the sweetest flowers would raise that body to life again; and so no more will the mere urging of dead sinners, even with the most powerful appeals and solicitations, ever awaken them to spiritual life;" but wherever the Gospel message may be successful—wherever blessed to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, wherever effectual to the saving of souls from final perdition—it is "not by might, nor by power, but by MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of Hosts!" And if it be so, and if we only from the heart believe it, surely we shall not be able to write one line in the sermon, or to utter one precept in the pulpit, or to begin one new plan for increased usefulness in the parish, or, in a word, to attempt to discharge the most ordinary duties in the sphere of our daily ministrations without first addressing our supplications to the all-sufficient and only-sufficient God, that it may be said of ourselves and of the people for whose souls we are watching—oh! with what trembling solicitude, awakened and produced by the conviction, that we are "watching as those that must give account"—"they shall all be taught of God."

Men, brethren, and fathers, it only remains for us closely and prayerfully to apply the subject to our own hearts. Let us reflect that the great secret of a faithful and successful ministry will be found to consist in the Divine aids and Divine illumination promised in the text; and therefore let it be our first resolve, our first desire and prayer, to seek for our souls this blessing. However numerous our clerical duties; however constant the demands upon our time and thoughts; however heavily the cares of the parish may press upon us—still let us reflect, that time must be found for *personal religion*, and some portion of each day must be spent alone with God, in praying for that Divine teaching without which all the teaching of man will have no more salutary influence than the moonbeam upon the snow-topped peak of the mountain, or upon the frozen surface of the lake. At the most and at the best, we can be but cisterns—supplying to men the waters of life—and cisterns whose usefulness must entirely depend upon our constantly deriving fresh supplies from Him, who is alone the FOUNTAIN of those waters; and it is, we believe, especially important to keep this great truth before our minds in the present day. There is, doubtless, much to encourage us in the position and prospects of our church: few traces of the spiritual torpor and deadness of the last century are now discernible. Signs of life, acti-

vity, and zeal everywhere present themselves, and unparalleled efforts are being made in a hundred different ways to "enlarge the cords and to strengthen the stakes" of our "tent." In our metropolis, for example, how much is being done! The plan for the subdivision of the large parishes; the great increase in the number of the churches and of the clergy—in many of those districts, where only a few years back the perishing multitudes were living and dying without God in the world—the thousands of children now receiving daily instruction in our schools; and all the labours of our Bible and Christian Knowledge Societies, and of our Scripture Reader Societies (these latter the more important because practically attesting that our LAITY are now at last recognised as a part of the church, and their cooperation permitted in many good works)—these are all to be hailed as "tokens for good"—evidences that "God, even our own God" is about to bless us. Nor are the missionary labours of our church to be accounted amongst the least remarkable characteristics of the times. Our missionary colleges, our missionary bishops, and the hundreds and hundreds of our missionary clergy; men who have literally forsaken all that was nearest and dearest for Christ's sake and His Gospel—all seem to stamp our church with the character of a MISSIONARY CHURCH; and never let it be forgotten that it is to the missionary church, labouring to "preach the Gospel to every creature" that the Divine promise preeminently, if not exclusively belongs—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." But in the midst of all these zealous and self-denying labours there is one serious evil to be guarded against: it is the perilous delusion of supposing that however perfect man may render the machinery—however increased the number of our churches, bishops, clergy, and schools—any blessed results will or can accrue without God's grace, and without God's teaching. Fulfil, then, to us, Thy ministering servants, O Lord our God, this gracious promise in the text. Let us have Thy Spirit's teaching; let us have Thy Spirit's presence even unto the end. Be with us in our closets, that we may duly improve each passing hour. Be with us in our public ministrations, that we may rightly divide the Word of truth. Be with us in the house of mourning, and beside the bed of sickness, that we may point the sufferer to the better and brighter world, where "God shall wipe away all tears." Let it be said of us, and of all "the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made us overseers," "they shall be all taught of God." And then, indeed, how blessed will be the fruit of our labours, and how great and glorious our reward, when, summoned to the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away," we shall be told of brands plucked from the eternal burning, of souls rescued from eternal woe, and sinners delivered from eternal death, by our feeble and unworthy instrumentality; and when we shall realise to our great and endless comfort the truth of that most holy and precious promise—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that have turned many unto righteousness as the stars for ever and ever!"

JOSEPH AN EXAMPLE TO YOUNG MEN.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. W. B. MACKENZIE, M.A.,

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, HOLLOWAY.

ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1849.

Before the Islington Branch of the Church of England Young Men's Society

"Moreover He called for a famine upon the land : He brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant : whose feet they hurt with fetters : he was laid in iron : until the time that His word came : the word of the Lord tried him. The king sent and loosed him : even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance : to bind his princes at his pleasure : and teach his senators wisdom." - Psalm cv. 16-22.

I MAY say at the outset, that though I am expected to address myself this evening specially to young men, still, that young persons of the other sex will consider themselves as quite within the scope of the counsel which may be suggested ; yea, indeed, I trust that all, old as well as young, may find the contemplation of this Scripture character "profitable for instruction in righteousness."

The history of Joseph is one of the most important links in the wondrous chain of God's Providence ; it conducts the patriarchs away from their uncertain sojourning among the Canaanites, and brings them into a foreign land, there to dwell and multiply into a great nation as God foretold to Abraham ; whence He delivered them amid the most astonishing displays of His Almighty power, and established them in the land of promise. But Joseph as a link in God's Providence, is not exactly our subject. We proceed, then, to set this interesting person before you as a pattern for your imitation ; in this respect, I have to request you to "look upon him, and consider him well ; to think thereupon and receive instruction."

Joseph was the youngest but one of twelve brothers ; high spirited, worldly-minded young men, who thought but little of governing themselves, and not very willing to be governed by their father. There seems no trace of personal religion about them, and were not a very good specimen of "brethren dwelling together in unity." Jacob's partiality for Rachel may probably have inclined him to prefer her two children ; and as they were the youngest, and their mother was no more, they, unhappily, usurped an undue share of their father's heart. His parental fondness for Joseph was strengthened by the marks of his early piety. He loved him for his youth's sake ; he loved him most endearingly for his mother's sake ; but he loved him, as Paul loved Timothy, for the "unfeigned faith that was in him." Their father's partiality for Joseph his brothers saw, and he soon became the object of their jealousy. Parents, who indulge such fond feelings, little think how surely they make a rod for the back of their favorite. The brooded coat—that unhappy token of a father's love—was viewed by them as a badge of favoritism which these proud spirits were not likely to brook.

Then this Joseph—this pampered minion, as his brothers viewed him, was looked on as a sort of spy, noting down and reporting their misconduct, to their father. He may have done it with the most artless and conscientious simplicity; in the hope that he might somehow reform their habits. No matter; he had possession of their father's heart, and they suspected that he carried tales about them to his ear; they felt that he did not belong to their party; jealousy, mistrust, and suspicion grew up between them, and it was easy to see that some sad outbreak must be the issue of all this.

Meanwhile the spirit of prophecy visits this pious youth. Two prophetic dreams assure him of future greatness. The dreams of sheaves in the cornfield, and the moon and stars in the heavens, making obeisance to himself, predict the future subjection of his brethren. These dreams Joseph unfortunately divulged. This again was not likely to pass by unnoticed. Here then, are causes at work in Jacob's family, especially in the position which Joseph occupied, which must produce inevitable mischief, unless some great change take place.

And thousands of young men are in Joseph's position. You would fain it were not so, but things in your father's house are so awkward—such conflicting interests—such bitter jealousies—such misinterpretations of motives and misconstructions of actions, that you feel it the most difficult thing in the world to get on among them. It requires uncommon wisdom to act your part well. Perhaps your relatives view you with envy. All may be as innocent on your part as on Joseph's. He could not help his father's love. He could not well decline his father's tokens of that love. He could not but feel honoured by God's prediction of his future greatness. But mark how Joseph bears all this; I do not read that these distinctions made Joseph self-conceited. I see no self-assumption, no swell of importance—no showing off the great man—no little, paltry, mean tricks to which the vanity of a grovelling mind descends to fish for compliments. One sees many a young person whose head would have been turned just by that brodered coat. Fine clothes—personal ornaments and such like foppery are the things for which thousands seek the glance of passing admiration. But, with these points of distinction, I see nothing in Joseph which indicates that he was lifted out of his place by them. There is a sobriety, a gravity, a thoughtful seriousness about him, which tells you what he is. He had his father's unbounded love, and his father had his own deep, loving, grateful obedience in return. He was gaily clad, but clothing was in his eye but the covering of a dying body. It is the concealment of sin's shame; make what you will of it, it is no more. And he knew, and was humbled to know, that some post of future greatness was marked out for him in the mysterious book of God's destinies; there was no arrogance, but he showed that "a meek and quiet spirit" was his best inheritance. He knew that God designed him for future honour, but he knew also, "before honour is humility."

I pass over the savage barbarity which instigated his brethren to abandon him to die of hunger in the pit at Dothan; I dwell not on their mitigated malice, as they thought it, in selling their brother as a captive into a foreign land. We find Joseph in the Egyptian capital, brought by men who, in that early age, made an accursed traffic in human blood. His personal appearance, probably, increased his value, and he was readily purchased by one of the royal officers as a domestic slave. It would be difficult to portray the anguish of soul, and the dismal forebodings as to the future, with which this youth enters upon his new scene of trial. He had scarcely ever left his father's eye. His employments had been among his father's flocks. A youth of seventeen.

he knew nothing of the ways of men—what were the snares of the great cities of Egypt he had no knowledge, and no desire to know. He was “simple concerning evil,” and little suspected what the world’s ways are. But ignorance of deep vice is but a poor safeguard when the temptation has fairly to be met. That artless simplicity,—the mere want of knowledge of the world’s temptations and snares, alas! soon gives way. Keep your children from the knowledge of vice as long as you can. Hide its hideous features from them; keep them by every device out of the sight of evil. But never think that ignorance alone will be any preservative when the trial comes. You must come to the conflict. You must stand the trial. You cannot get out of the way, temptation will come direct across your path. And it must be seen whether or not there be *that* in you which will endure the trial.

If, amid the distinctions of his father’s house, Joseph showed no signs of self-importance, now when transferred to the menial obscurity of a domestic slave, he shows no symptoms of discontent. I hear no murmuring escape his lips—no complaining against his unfeeling brethren, no proud spirit that could not bend to his new circumstances, mortifying as he must find them. It was enough to dishearten any one, for, as far as he could judge, his prospects were ruined for life; he could not reasonably look for any thing, but to end his days as a bondsman in a foreign land; yet, no complaint either against God or men is breathed from his lips; but, with the spirit of one, far more deeply tried in the school of sorrow, Joseph had learnt early in life “how to be abased and how to abound;” “in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content.”

But, we must notice, that the real secret of Joseph’s character is plainly set forth. “And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.” Joseph soon finds himself in a land of idolatry—in which God, and truth, and righteousness are unknown. Nothing would be easier, or more natural, than that placed as he was, he should lay aside all further regard to religion, and fall in with the habits of the Egyptians. He might have done this. One wonders he did not. Thousands do. But this poor, unprotected slave was not made of those shifting materials. He was neither to be laughed, nor shamed, nor frightened out of his religion. Religion was not to him just a thing of education, which he left behind him with his school books, nor a mere custom of his father’s house, which he no longer cared to maintain. To fear God was part and parcel of himself. Increasing years did not weaken, change of abode could not alter, his soul’s steadfast allegiance to God. “*The Lord was with him.*” He knew it. He felt it as deeply in his exile in Egypt as in his labours at home. “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man can do to me.” There was to him a felt reality in his convictions and experience. He might not be understood. He had been long used to scorn and brow-beatings, from his own brethren, and now, amid idolaters, his religion might seem to them a mere fable. Still, he reasoned well: “others are not the lords of my conscience; it is for *me* to consider whether God, and the soul, and a dying hour, and a judgment day, and an endless eternity, are not matters to be cared for in Egypt as much as in Canaan; or whether I can devise some method of escape if I neglect so great salvation.”

And let it be noted, that his master took notice of his religious principles.

I do not know how he could do otherwise. Probably he never cared a straw whether his servants worshipped their idols or not. Like thousands of employers in great cities even now, he never troubled his head about the *souls* of those he employed. But, he cannot help seeing that this young man makes him a better servant than others. The fruit compels him to examine the tree. He is more conscientious, more diligent, more dutiful, more trustworthy. Potiphar saw that his fear of God was a good thing in Joseph, and he promotes him over all his other servants into a place of the highest trust in his household; and commits all he has to his confidential stewardship. Now here is an example to be copied. How many of my hearers have been transferred from the seclusion of domestic life, in distant parts of the country, and find yourselves immersed in the seductions and the tumult of this great city! And how many thousands of young men, having some regard for religion while under their father's roof, have too much reason to curse the day when they first set their incautious foot on the streets of London! Better to have come bound with fetters for the slave market, and sold off for incessant labour, than to enjoy your liberty only to plunge with deeper ruin into the perils of a city, where many alas! come to bury their names in infamy, their prospects in ruin, and their bodies in an early grave. Oh! it is a noble sight, and the busy scenes of this city present many such, to see a young man, whose righteous soul disdains the ways of sin, whose morning hour is spent with his Bible open before him, and his God looking complacently down upon him from above, after pleading for grace to keep him from all temptation, and to fill his soul with good—to see such an one, sitting at the same desk with some licentious sceptic, whose lips are now profaned by blasphemy, now poisoned by the slime of filthy talk, and—to mark how he bears all this; there is many a young man whose soul is vexed with the filthy conversation; he loathes the atmosphere of irreligion he is forced to breathe, and sighs and cries for the abominations which he is compelled to witness, and against which, day by day, he lifts his voice of unflinching protestation. This is real heroism. Be not discouraged. This is your hour of trial. Place before you the example of God's suffering people. Think of Lot in Sodom, David among the lions in his day, and Daniel in his. Commit the keeping of your soul to Him who is your faithful Creator, and "He will bring forth thy judgment as the light, and thy righteousness as the noon day." As a counteraction to such baneful influence, how valuable such associations as *The Young Men's Society*? Companions, books, information, at hand to instruct the understanding and improve the heart.

The next event in the history of Joseph is the determined and persevering assault made upon his personal virtue under circumstances of peculiar danger. It was not that he went in the way of this temptation. He was not idle, not unwatchful, not exposing himself in any way to the temptation. He was diligently occupied in his daily duties, and yet he was not safe from shameless and reiterated solicitations to sin. There is not a sin which fills the world with more misery, and plunges more souls to the bottomless abyss of hell, than the sin of personal impurity. It is the wasting plague that desolates the youth of large cities, and consigns its myriads to infamy and destruction. If this sermon shall produce no other effect than raising a barrier against the floods of ungodliness which young persons have to encounter, this will be an important result. Oh! it is a great thing if one is enabled to walk in the slippery years of earlier life so as "to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." For alas! what multitudes fall ruinously here! Could we see the misery which this sin has produced—the bitter gnawings of remorse, the

burning blushes of shame, the consciousness of self-degradation which follow the earlier indulgence of this crime; and then when sin becomes more common, the hardening of the conscience, all religious convictions fast dying out, and all intercourse with God ceasing, and then see the kind of companions who gather around a young man whose example still more hardens and pollutes the soul,—oh! could we see, in one vast combination, the mass of infernal miseries which this vice alone has engendered, methinks it would leave such an impression of horror on the soul, that you never could be watchful enough “lest you give your honour unto others, and your years unto the cruel.”

This sin not only makes a man an intolerable burden of misery to himself, but he becomes the scourge and the pest of whatever society is polluted by his presence. Perhaps it would be difficult to find a person who is destroying so much happiness and ruining so many bright hopes, as a man of gaiety and pleasure. It may seem enchanting enough at first, but remember, the end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword. You may fancy that a taste of this poisonous cup will do no harm, and that a step or two taken in this path of vice can soon be retraced; but though all sin is deceitful, none so bewilders and infatuates the soul, none so directly deadens the conscience and destroys every vestige of truth and righteousness from the bosom, as indulgence in this insidious vice. The Old Testament history is full of awful warnings against it. The cities of the plain were overthrown by the miraculous outburst of God's anger, because of this sin. The Israelites were chastised with merciless bloodshed because of their guilty abominations among the Midianitish strangers. The book of Proverbs lifts its warning voice again and again, to keep you from the seductions of this sin. Our Lord ranks adultery and fornication among the most deadly evils which take their origin in the corrupt heart of man. Hardly an epistle is written, but the Spirit of holiness inserts there some solemn admonition, that they who indulge such sins shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And one of the last sayings which shut up the book of Revelation is, that “whoremongers shall have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death.”

But if Joseph's temptation shows our danger, his wise example shows our mode of safety. Here is a servant of God in the most perilous condition. One false step, one incautious word, one unguarded glance at that moment, and he is a ruined man. Oh! what need to pray, “*hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.*” From temptations of this sort, when they do occur, there is but one means of escape. You must get out of their way. Safety here is not in *patient endurance*, but in *immediate flight*. One cannot sufficiently commend the deep piety of Joseph's reply to his tempter; besides the ingratitude and wrong of the crime against his master, he rested his main resistance upon its great guilt in the sight of God. Ah! gloss it over as you may; call it by soft names; plead its prevalence; seek a thousand vain extenuations—but know after all, that it is a deep, dark, soul-damning sin in the sight of a holy God; and if you will practise it, God will make you feel by the horrors of a guilty conscience, and by the anguish of an undying worm, what a grievous and bitter thing it is thus to sin against God.

We are becoming more refined in our social habits and language, but it does not follow from that, that the morals of society are really improved. External refinement is one thing, real purity of heart is another. I am not at all aware that the corruptions of the world through lust are in any way diminished. Dangers are as great as ever. The most scrupulous watchfulness is as needful now as ever. If you would escape the snares, you must put a guard upon your senses. You must “make a covenant with your eyes.” You must refuse to

harbour an unchaste thought. You must mortify the rising inclination. Your strength in this conflict is at the outset. "*Obsta principiis*," must be your motto. Songs and dances, novels and poetry, those licentious plates and pictures which pander to evil, and above all, theatrical exhibitions, which in order to become popular with the depraved taste, must be tinctured with guilty passion*,—these things, I conjure you, as one who cares for your present and eternal welfare, diligently shun. I speak plainly, brethren. It is not every day that a minister can *dwell* on this great evil. But the very character which you selected for me this evening makes it imperative that I should enforce this great duty upon my hearers, that ye "flee youthful lusts which war against the soul."

Disappointed villainy will soon fabricate some falsehood for revenge. This Joseph soon found. When the tempter found that she could not betray him into her vicious embrace, she resolved to slander the fair character which she could not corrupt. She could wither his prospects, though she failed to ruin his virtue. Better be remanded by an unjust sentence, to the dark desolation of a dungeon, than revel in prodigal debauchery in a palace. So Joseph decided. His downright integrity of principle, that would not sin against God and his own soul, nor wrong his master, brought him to prison. Now what a reverse ! An exile in a heathen land—not a friend to cheer him—not a voice to pity—his condition more hopeless than ever. Now his name is infamous ; his very character is branded with disgrace. Now perhaps you will say—'I am sure I could never have endured all this ; it would have broken my heart.' If Joseph had been a man of the world, most likely this disaster would not have befallen him, because he would not have resisted the temptation ; he would most likely have begun a career of licentious abominations in his master's house, which would have led to another course of events. But Joseph remained true to God. He was not left. God remembered him in his low estate. His trials, crushing, desolating I admit them to be, were his greatest honour. He was led off to prison a martyr to virtue. The spirit of glory rested upon him. These were trials which he chose to brave, because he resolved he would not sin. As to his liberty and his employment in his master's house, it is not necessary that he should keep them ; but it is necessary that he should not sin. He lost Potiphar's patronage, but he preserved the peace of his own conscience, and he paced up and down his solitary dungeon, cheered still by the presence and approbation of his God. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee."

Now here again, we have a feature of character far too precious to be passed over. Imagine a young man, torn from his father's house, brought up to London, sent to work in some humble occupation, but whose unflinching integrity commands the approbation of his employer, and is rewarded by honourable promotion—think of him standing firm in the hour of base and systematic temptation, and because his principles are too inflexibly righteous to dishonour God or to wrong his neighbour, disappointed villainy turns his accuser, and he is sent, under charges which his soul abhorred, in chains to Newgate. There is the case before us. How does he bear this ? How *can* he bear it ? A mere man of the world would be thrust down into despair ; his reason would forsake his bewildered brain—and the loaded pistol, a bottle of poison, or were it possible, a murderous leap from the Monument, would be his mad refuge.

But see the man of God in the deepest abyss of worldly trial. Calm in his spirit, kind in his manner to his fellow-prisoners, without a murmur against

* "As the stage now is," says Archbishop Tillotson, "plays are not fit to be permitted in any Christian nation. By the profaneness of them they are apt to instil bad principles, and by their lewdness to dispose to dissolute practice."

God, without a reproach towards any man. When he mentions his own sad history to others in the prison, he just intimates that he was stolen from the Hebrews; he does not say he was sold as a slave and that his *own brothers* did it. As to his imprisonment, he says not one word about the falsehood, the base temptation, the unjust severity, which sent him there, but contents himself by saying, "*I have done no wrong.*" What amazing forbearance in a young man, then suffering from the foulest injustice! With what patience does he possess his soul! How plainly his whole demeanour says—"I leave the matter in other hands! It is a strange path in which God is leading me, but it must come right at last. Here I will wait until the Lord command deliverance for me." A gleam of hope might spring up, when his fellow-prisoner was restored to his place in Pharaoh's palace. Joseph seems to have indulged the idea that the chief butler might use his interest with the king, and procure his freedom. He pressed him to remember him. But this hope soon fails. The man forgot both his promise and his companion in trouble, and "*two full years*" did Joseph still linger in prison. Thus God tried him by every form of discipline; seductive temptations are allowed to accost him; blighted reputation extinguish his hopes, the foulest injustice robs him of liberty: cruel ingratitude consigns him to forgetfulness; and now long, wearisome, tedious delay, serves to exhaust his spirit. It is a great deal easier to bear a sharp trial, and have done with it, than to have it thus prolonged; to meet the same gloomy aspect of things—to be overhung with the same disappointments month by month, to rise dejected morning after morning, wearied with devising useless plans, and to retire night after night with no prospect that to-morrow will bring any relief—ah! it is *hope thus deferred* which "maketh the heart sick." Thus the word of the Lord "*tried him to the uttermost.*" Things were brought with him to the lowest pitch. I can hear the deep sighing of his anguished soul, as he looked towards the gratings of his cell—"O Lord! I am oppressed! undertake for me!" It is in this spirit that this eminent saint "glorified God in the fires."

One more view we must take of this Scripture character. See him, by a marvellous course of providential events, strikingly God's own doing, exalted to be the viceroy of the kingdom of Egypt, second only to royalty itself. My brethren, if it be difficult to bear severe misfortunes without murmuring, and to endure injustice with submission, it is immensely more difficult to enjoy brilliant prosperity without the heart being lited up. Potiphar's dungeon was a place of less peril than the throne and the sceptre in the imperial palace. But the God that kept him in the hour of his brothers' malice, and endued him with strength to bear his tempter's seductions, and his long dreary incarceration in the dungeon, the same God kept him, now that he is beset with the glittering grandeur of a court.

You may find many men who will suffer loss with contentment, and they have acknowledged that the trials and the straitness of their harder lot proved a real blessing to their souls. But what instances have you ever known, where any great and sudden transition from obscurity to distinction, like this—from a *prison* to a *palace*—in one day to put off the garb of a prisoner, and appear before the world with the decorations of a peerage—what man's piety could safely endure this? And then to find, by a series of marvellous providences, that his own brethren, the authors of all his sorrows, were among the crowds of needy applicants for his bounty, and the dreams which he dreamt should all come true to the very letter; and there, at the footstool of his own throne, prostrate in lowliest obeisance, he sees, and recognizes the very faces that mocked him so scornfully, and the hands that basely sold him into captivity!

There is the severest trial of his principles. Raised to that position, a thousand new snares beset him. What a temptation to forget God and live like Pharaoh, while surrounded with all the intoxicating luxury of his court! What danger of *proud self-importance*, to see himself standing on such a pinnacle of greatness, and all Egypt's nobles look up to him for direction; while Egypt's teeming resources are laid at his feet! Yet, you see nothing of self in all this. He knew how to be abased, and now he knows how to *abound*. He bore long trials with patience, and that prepared him to stand upon the giddy height with safety and humility. Had he been suddenly transferred from the sheepfolds at Hebron to sway the sceptre at Memphis, it is easy to see how complete his incapacity for the charge. But twenty-two years of severe and wholesome discipline prepared him for the fulfilment of his dream. Want and privation, the scorn of the proud, and the snares of the wicked, had schooled his inexperienced heart, and God saw then that He *could trust him to be great*. His heart was so tamed down by severe and biting hardships, that he could wear a coronet without being arrogant, and see his worst enemies at his feet without indulging the idea of revenge. It is a good thing to dwell upon the piety of his youth, when it cost him scorn and exile; it is good to notice the downright inflexible integrity of the servant, beset with temptation to dishonesty, and allured by crime—though all this cost him his reputation and his liberty; but it is a nobler trait in his character to see him great, but not proud; made much of by others, but humble in his own eyes; flattered by men, yet unbendingly faithful to God. He never failed to ascribe every particle of the glory to Him. No boast of his own wisdom: "God sent him there to preserve life." He abhorred the idea as blasphemy against the Most High. It was not to self, but to God, he owed his safety in peril, and his deliverance from deep distress. "The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; He bringeth low and lifteth up; He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them."

Two short observations.

1. Let this character yield support and consolation to young men and others who may be placed in trying circumstances. Jarring interests at home. uncongenial associates in the walks in life, situations of severe temptation to your principles, beset with licentious examples, and in any way thrown into circumstances of severe and wearisome hardships—well, yours is no strange case. Thousands are like you. It is your trial. Now, be the man of God in that position. "Quit you like men. Be strong." Stand firm to your post of duty. "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ." And remember that the fear of God alone is your strength. All other principles will snap on the first pressure of real temptation. "Be strong, and He will strengthen thine heart; be strong, I say, in the Lord."

2. God is working out His own purposes. He has an object in view. In due time He will show *what* it is. His schemes fetch a wide compass, and take a long time to expand. Take heed lest you *mar* it by *sin*, or *unbelief*. "Commit thy way to the Lord, and He shall bring it to pass." What He is doing, you know not now. Your life is a link in a chain of wonders which you cannot trace. You cannot *see*; you must *believe*. You cannot *rejoice*; you must *confide*. "I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation."

FUNDAMENTAL ERRORS OF EDUCATION.

A Sermon,

BY THE

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PREACHED IN ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

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Before making a Collection in behalf of the Church of England Training Schools

"And Jesus answering said unto them. Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?"—Mark xii. 24.

THE principle contained in these words is of very extensive application ; it extends, more or less, to every question, private or public, social or political, economical or personal. The one grand spring of all error in lands possessed of the Bible is ignorance, perversion, or misunderstanding of the Scriptures of truth. All questions, whether in the council or the sanctuary, in the closet or the palace, ought to be directly decided by the lively oracles. But to have the Scriptures and to understand them, to understand them and practically and effectually to apply them, these are things wide asunder. It was not to the ungodly heathen who possessed the precious gift of revelation that St. Paul said, "Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame;" it was not to the Gentiles to whom God had not made Himself known, but to the Jews, to whom the lively oracles were committed, that Jesus, rebuking their vain notions, and their dark misgivings and unbelief, "answered and said Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." He that knows the Scriptures and walks in their light may be compared to that angel whom St. John saw in the apocalypse, who "stood in the sun." For there is light all about him—light reflected on every subject which he seeks to investigate; and that light is without a shade of darkness, it is truth without any mixture of error.

Were we to test by the principle contained in these words of our Lord, very many of the theories and systems and schemes which are rife in the present day, we should find them to be utterly valueless. And amongst the theories, systems, and schemes, which are most popular, but at the same time most perilous, are those on the subject of education, more especially national education. The question of education itself is one of such magnitude, such surpassing momentousness, that mistakes in reference to it cannot but be fraught with mischief and peril; and such mistakes arise from the same source as the Sadducean error sprang—namely, ignorance of God's Word in its fulness and spirituality, and of "the power of God unto salvation" revealed in it. It is therefore a very interesting and a very weighty subject to which we invite your earnest attention, that of the prevalent errors on the subject of the education of man, arising from ignorance of the Holy Scriptures. May God's Spirit be with us, that we may receive His word with meekness and with purity of spirit.

There are four or five great fundamental errors which lie at the foundation of most of the popular schemes of education which innovating and unbelieving men are seeking to foist upon this great Christian nation.

The first of these are errors respecting the nature of man, under which he is regarded as a creature of time rather than as a candidate for eternity. It is impossible that you can train any one aright unless you clearly discern for what purpose he was intended. If you do not know for what end a person is to be trained, how can you possibly train him aright? Now, though there may not be an avowal of the infidel view, that man has nothing to live for besides this shadowy scene; though there are but few, perhaps, who would tell you

deliberately that man is not destined to a future existence, yet practically there is an immense amount of opinion afloat on the subject of educating man which, if traced to its real source, will be found attributable to practical infidelity as to the true objects of man's existence and destiny. If it were the fact that man had simply to live for threescore years and ten at most, and that beyond this narrow sphere there was no prospect for him except that of annihilation; if it were the fact that having a dream, or an uncertain prospect of after existence, that after existence had no connection with his present state of being, so that the question how he acted here would have no influence on the question how he should be placed hereafter; if it were true that man's life was a mere chance-born thing, that came from nothing, and would return to nothing; or if, while it was probable that man would have some after-state of being, he were yet so wholly in the dark respecting his future state of existence that he had no practical concern in it, and it was his truest wisdom entirely to lose sight of the future, and to "eat and drink" solely because "to-morrow he must die;" then it is very plain that the education fitted for such a being would be essentially different from the course of education which ought to be pursued in relation to a being who is sowing here a harvest that is to be reaped throughout eternity. If man were thus only the creature of time, then we should teach him and train him for time, qualify him to act his part in this short state of existence, enable him as far as possible, to escape suffering and inconvenience, and to obtain as much as possible of personal gratification and enjoyment. This would be in accordance with man's position and destiny if he were the mere creature of time. But if we consult even our own blind wisdom; if we consult the whispers of nature and of providence; if we consult the suggestions and remonstrances of conscience, however darkened and depraved conscience may be; if we consult the secret instincts of our own fallen nature, however shattered that nature may be through the fall, we find strong and overpowering reasons for concluding that such is not man's nature, and such is not his prospect beyond the grave. And when we come to the oracles of truth which "bring life and immortality to light," we find that they pour a flood of illumination on man's origin, on man's complicated nature, on man's awful responsibility, on man's imperishable destiny. He no longer appears a poor foolish insect that floats for a few days in the sunshine and is then lost for ever; he is seen to be a spiritual and immortal creature. Beneath a tenement of clay we see a being who comes from God and returns to God, and so begin at last to feel the force of that terrible appeal, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—in exchange for himself, for the soul is the man's self that alone is the man.

But here Scripture casts a light on that dread unknown world—unknown but for revelation—to which we are hastening. It teaches us that not only must man exist beyond the grave, but that his existence beyond the grave is essentially connected with his character and conduct on this side the grave; it teaches us that the gulf which will be fixed there is formed here, that the character which will there be stamped indelibly is here portrayed in the inner man; in short, it teaches us that this life is the seed-time of immortality, and that what a man soweth, that shall he also reap, so that "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap everlasting corruption," while he that "soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life." Scripture teaches us too, that all the duties, all the pursuits, all the aims and ends, of this life are to be made to bend to and to bear upon the life that is to come; so that whatsoever a man findeth to do in his secular calling, in his domestic retirement, or in his social enjoyments should be done as by one who must strictly give an account "of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil." Scripture teaches us that a man's every act is pregnant with a seed which shall germinate in eternity. How

different, then, is the education which is due to such a being, from that of which we have spoken ! No longer is it meet or becoming, or philosophical, or rational, much less scriptural, to prepare him for his worldly station or calling, to fit him to gain his livelihood and then to leave him as if he were akin to the brute that perisheth. Education adapted to such a being as man is discerned to be by the light of revelation is education which trains him in time for eternity, which constrains him to fulfil the duties of the present life by the master-motive borrowed from the life to come ; an education, which regards and treats him as a moral and spiritual agent acting under the eye of his unseen Creator, Ruler, Preserver, and Judge, by whom he will shortly be reckoned with for every secret thing, for every thought of his heart, whether it be good or whether it be bad.

The education, therefore, of a creature such as man is thus proved by Scripture to be, however it may and ought to regard the qualifying of man for his earthly pursuits and calling, should regard such qualifications as entirely subordinate to those for his everlasting calling ; and we ought ever to put the eternal before the temporal, the spiritual before the animal, the divine before the human. We need not do more, beloved brethren, than ask those amongst you who are accustomed to observe and reflect, to recall the various systems of education which are too prevalent in our land at this very moment, the various speculations on the question of national education which are year by year acquiring more and more boldness, and becoming more and more subjects of discussion amongst would-be philosophers ; and when you have recalled these and attentively weighed and considered them, you will perceive, that to a very large extent the error committed springs from this one grand fundamental and fatal mistake—that man is regarded as a creature of time and not as a candidate for eternity, the subject of a judgment to come big with his everlasting destiny.

But there is a second mistake arising from the same ignorance of holy Scripture, which, though more subtle, is scarcely less active in its operation than that on which we have briefly commented. In many schemes of modern education man is regarded as simply intellectual rather than as endued with moral and intellectual faculties combined. Many look upon man as if he had merely a head to be cultivated, instead of a heart requiring to be fashioned, formed and trained aright. Education based on such a principle must be insufficient. Man is regarded in it as a simple being instead of being regarded as a complex one, which his own consciousness and experience must tell him he is, and which the testimony of Scripture abundantly confirms. We are not constituted simply with understanding, and reason, and those faculties which are ordinarily designated the faculties of man. We have also a combination of affections, moral dispositions, and tendencies. We have a conscience ; we have love, joy, fear, hope, and sorrow, and the whole range of moral sentiments and feelings. Now, if you teach man's intellect simply, and do not train the moral powers and qualities which belong to him, at the very best you do but half educate the being ; you do not educate the entire man. Moreover, we contend that education which is only intellectual will but little affect the moral part of man. It is perfectly possible for a man to see and approve what is right and yet to follow what is wrong. Man is not so much governed by simple knowledge as by principle, which is the combination of affections and of conviction, and not simply an act of the will. A man may have many impressions and convictions in his mind which do not tell upon his heart, form his motives, and regulate his actions. Nothing, indeed, is more common than to find men whose understandings and intellectual powers are clear and acute, while their moral perceptions are dark and depraved ; nothing is more common than to find an acute and clear head associated with a dark and debased heart. It is not merely the outcasts of society who have been brought up in brutal ignorance that are reckless of duty and pests of society ; there are to be found amongst

them many of our ablest and cleverest men—men whose intellect is acute, but whose moral nature is altogether depraved and debased, having undergone no training and no process of renovation. Beloved brethren, there is a fatal mistake abroad in the present day that the intellect is everything. Intellect is very little in comparison with the moral dispositions. In comparison with the state of the moral agent in the sight of God intellect is of no real worth. Let it not be forgotten that the most fallen and desperate beings in the universe are creatures of mighty intellectual power. We have no reason to suppose that Satan has not an intellect mighty as that of Gabriel. Whence then, is the boundless difference between the two? Why is the one basking in the presence of God and resting in His shadow, while the other is kept in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone and reserved for the vengeance of the last day? Just because the one has the moral image of God, and the other exhibits the very antipodes of that image, because the one is all holiness, love and joy; and the other is all depravity, malignity, and wretchedness. Regarded in the light of Scripture, the sins and lusts of the mind are even more hateful than the sins and lusts of the body, the filthiness of the spirit is more loathsome to God than that of the flesh. Men forget that there are sins which devils cannot commit, and yet devils are the impersonation of all that is most hateful in human character in the sight of God, of all that is most opposed to love and to goodness. Every system of education, therefore, which has respect to the mere culture of the intellect, to the forming and fashioning of the character of man so as to enable him to act his part in this world without considering his duty to God, is utterly imperfect, and must more or less be productive of mischief. In the striking and emphatic language of one of the greatest men of the day, so far as earthly wisdom goes, such an education can only "make clever devils." It may cultivate the intellectual powers, but it will not necessarily elevate the moral; it will leave the heart degraded, and while that is the case the man will still do its dark behests.

But, brethren, we advance a step further. There is another false principle which is, if possible, more rife in society, and not a whit less fatal than the two on which we have enlarged. It is that of regarding man in his education as if he were an innocent, or at worst a slightly perverted and misled being—a being injured by force of custom, evil example, unhappy peculiarities of climate, of law, or of society, but not corrupt at the core. Here, again, it is clear that such an error must be fundamental and fatal. How vain would be the toil of the husbandman, if seeing the garnet, or the cockle, or the thistle, growing in dark luxuriance where he hoped to reap his future harvest, and not discerning that the ground was full of such pestilent weeds—how vain would be his toil if, betrayed by his ignorance of the soil, he were to cast in his seed and not discover his mistake until the rain and the sunshine brought up the weeds in rank luxuriance, and caused them to destroy and suffocate the expected harvest! Even so, if we make a mistake as to the soil which education is to cultivate; if we, in looking at the innocence and simplicity of childhood, as it is popularly but not accurately termed, forget that even in the youngest and most seemingly innocent child there are pregnant seeds of all that is evil, mischievous and depraved, in the most matured criminals; if we forget that we have to deal, not with a being whose heart has a tendency to all that is fine, and beautiful, and just, and temperate, but with a being who was "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," and whose heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," so that the "imagination" and the "thoughts" of it, if left to themselves, are "only evil continually," and God, instead of being in all the thoughts and emotions, is excluded and banished from the temple which He had fashioned and framed for Himself; if we take such a view of man, then assuredly, brethren, our whole system of education based on it will be inefficacious and abortive. We are not adapting the means to the end; we are not treating the subject according to the reality of things.

And is there not an immense amount of education which is based on this false principle? Men say, you have only to educate and teach men, and crime would cease, every mischief would be banished, and we should have a kind of intellectual millennium--instruction would do every thing. The leviathan is not to be so tamed; "the wilderness and the solitary place" are not to be so made "to blossom as the rose;" the thistle and the brier are not thus to be superseded by the box-tree, the shittim and the fir-tree. It is a fond, but vain notion. Let us look at the result of the experiment as tried in foreign nations; let us look at it as tried in ancient Greece and Rome. Athens was the most refined city of ancient times, yet was she the most depraved, the most rebellious, the most cruel, and in many respects the most base. Why? Because there was the simple cultivation of the man in his intellectual nature. There was no remedial process. There was no cure for his deadly malady; there was no physician who could meet his case. And when men have the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," with its sovereign balm offered to all, and its sovereign Physician revealed to all, oh! how strange and how infatuated is the conduct of those who would set aside that balm and that Physician, and seek to train man as if there were no need of "balm in Gilead," and no need of a "physician there!"

Assuredly, of all such schemes of education it will be found in the result that we have been "sowing the wind," and we must expect therefore to "reap the whirlwind." It is true that in the innocent infant, as we are wont to term it, it is but the beginning of dark tempers, appetites, and passions, that we see developed; and yet the mother is here generally the soundest divine, for she has practical evidence, fearful indications, with regard to the infant which she cradles in her lap and fondles on her breast, that the heart is prone to evil and averse to God. The heart of man in infancy has been compared to a blank sheet of paper on which no dark characters are inscribed. The dark characters, however, are always at best written with invisible ink, and you have only to bring them in contact with the fire of temptation and they will stand out in all their youthful and fearful distinctness. Youth often resembles in this respect the young tiger. The animal looks very quiet and gentle; but the discerning man anticipates its fearful spring, and knows that in a moment the deadly claw would be upon any one within its reach. Oh! brethren, if the children of our nation are trained up in the manner which I have described; if it be taken for granted that all that has befallen our nature is some very slight defection from God; if we do not gauge the depth of the malady, we shall never educate aright, and such an education God will never bless.

But advancing still further, even when we come to the only effectual specific which sovereign grace and wisdom hath provided, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," who healeth all our diseases, forgiveth all our iniquities, and gave Himself for us that He might, redeem us from all iniquity, that He might create us anew unto good works, and again stamp us with His image as destined for the kingdom of our God and Father; even when we come to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, here too a fatal mistake largely prevails as to the very nature and character of the revelation itself. We are told by many, and many act on the assumption in their schemes and theories for educating the people, that it is the moral code of Scripture with which we have to do; that we have no reason to trouble ourselves about the Word of God except portions of it in which all agree; that we ought to agree upon such selections from the Word of God that all classes may meet on common ground, and that there may be no sectarian differences and collision amongst the rising generation, while all have sufficient of Divine truth to qualify them for time and to prepare them for eternity. Now to say nothing of the daring and deadly presumption of thus sitting in judgment on the Word of God and of saying, "this is superfluous" and "that is not essential," let it never be forgotten that if the Word of God be merely the revelation of a

moral law more cure and more pure than that which we have by nature, it would never cure man's malady or suit his case. If you take away all but a mere general notion of a world and a judgment to come; if you keep back the great distinctive doctrines of the Word of God; if you reserve or shroud or throw into the shade "Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" if you do not determine in the work of education to "know nothing" amongst the young as amongst the aged "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," your education will be a thorough abortion. Cultivate morals without motives! As easily might you plant trees without roots, or turn the tree upside down, planting the branches instead of its roots. In vain the beautiful precepts of Scripture unless they are quickened into life by the glorious doctrines of Scripture!

"Talk they of morals? O Thou bleeding Lamb,
The grand morality is love of Thee."

There is no morality worthy of the name but what grows beneath the shadow of Thy cross and is watered by Thy blood. They only have the safeguard of morals, who have faith in Christ Jesus as delivering them from the curse of the law, as restoring them to the favour of God, as renewing them after the Divine image, as "working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure," and supplying them with the renovating Spirit as well as the atoning blood. This is the only way in which man can ever be made capable of exhibiting the holy fruits of the Gospel, cultivated in time and fitted for eternity.

And, therefore, brethren, it is a fatal mistake to suppose that by giving to the young, in some vain and visionary scheme of education, certain texts and portions of God's Word, selected by men who disagree in everything except in disparaging and disliking God's Word, you will give them that which will be a sufficient substitute for God's blessed Word. The Lord will blow on all such poor, mischievous schemes, and will put their authors to shame.

Beloved brethren, there is one false principle more, springing from ignorance of Scripture at which we must briefly glance; it is this—that forms and ceremonies, and the mere outward appliances of the church, will suffice in the education of young redeemed immortals; that the dissemination of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and the work of the Spirit accompanying it, are superfluous, provided the child have been baptised by one duly authorised to administer the sacrament, and pass in due time through all the successive, and beautiful, and intelligent spiritual solemnities of the church—that if in due time it be presented for confirmation, brought to the table of the Lord, and taught certain catechisms, creeds, and forms, then it is infallibly educated for time and for eternity. It is forgotten that all the while the child may be a mere whitened sepulchre. You may formalise a child without spiritualising it. Beautiful is baptism if it be made an intelligent service—if the child be taught to know and understand, as soon as it comes to years, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession has been made on its behalf; if it be instructed and entreated to renounce what God has forbidden and to do what God commands; if it be taught that human nature is altogether condemned and lost in Adam, and can only have deliverance and life in Christ; if it be through line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, the forms and ceremonies of the Christian church become reasonable and intelligent services, because Christ is thus made the centre—otherwise they are but a wretched formality, they have no power or spirit in them. At best they do but make an automaton; they give not a living soul to the unvital man. Beloved brethren, such an education is by no means uncommon in the present day. There are many zealous for our church, and zealous, too, in general for the Word of God, who nevertheless lean so much upon outward forms and ceremonies that they virtually set aside the work of the Spirit and the power of the blessed Gospel of Christ. Nay, if they dared to speak out, many would be ready to say, with the dark church of Rome, "The less of

Scripture the better, in the hands of the unpractised and the inexperienced; that God's Word is not to be trusted in the hands of the simple and vulgar many, that it ought rather to be confined to the privileged few, and that these should rather dole it out through the dark lantern of their own notions, just as it seems best to them. Thank God we have not so learnt the Protestant principles of our reformed church. We believe that "the foolishness of God is wiser than man," and that His book is as safe in the hands of the simplest child as in those of the wisest philosophers, if both are taught by the Spirit of God. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." "If any man will be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise." Many a little Sunday school child would rebuke and put to shame the philosophical Christian, who fancies that he knows too much to be taught, but who yet might learn experimental godliness from a sick and dying Sunday school child. Oh! how does "God choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty!"

Beloved brethren, we have hitherto simply referred you to a few of those erroneous principles which lie at the foundation of much of the education of our land; and all of which only needed to be tested by the touchstone of Scripture, in order that you might at once discover their futility. "Prove all things" by the Bible; "hold fast that which is good."

Ere we apply our subject to the Training Institution which is the immediate object that invites your attention this evening, let us appeal to yourselves--to your own consciences and your own understandings. Are you educating yourselves, or are you seeking to be educated by others, on false principles? Are you only careful to know what will tell, as you think, on your present state, regardless of what will tell on your everlasting condition? Are you looking upon yourselves as if the mere cultivation of the intellect would suffice to prepare you to meet God, or are you looking for renovation of heart and the formation of right principles in the inner man? Are you regarding yourselves as only partially fallen, and not as needing a radical and thorough renewal, but only an outward change--as requiring, indeed, an outward change, but not a new creation, a "new birth unto righteousness?" Are you viewing the Word of God as merely a code of rules by which to walk, or as merely describing a world to come to which you must look forward, or do you regard it as the discovery of God's gracious plan of justification, sanctification, and glorification for the lost sinner? Are you led to see Christ as "all in all?" My brethren, examine yourselves. "Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you except you be reprobate? Know ye not that you are not your own, but are bought with a price?"

Beloved brethren, let me now call your attention briefly, but generally, to the important position of that institution for which we desire to draw forth your interest. Simply to secure education at the present moment may be said to be the most critical question connected with our land. It is a question of the magnitude of which all classes in the community are more or less convinced. It is a question which has been sorely neglected in days gone by. We rejoice in the interest which it has excited of late, but we "rejoice with trembling." Educated the people ought to be, the people must be, the people, if we do our duty, may be. But the grand question is, how are they to be educated? Are they to be educated for time simply, or in time for eternity? Are they to be educated secularly, or spiritually? Are they to be educated as the chance-born creatures of a day, or as redeemed candidates for eternity and for glory? The great question is now in the balance; and how much will depend on the perseverance and the patience with which the Christian portion of the community give themselves to the work! Upon their efforts must it largely depend whether or not education shall take a semi-infidel and latitudi-

narian turn, or whether it shall be kept in blessed union with the Bible as the corner-stone, and the top-stone—and more especially, brethren—we speak to you now as members of our church—whether it shall be kept under the wing and the direct guidance of our church; we say not exclusively. We do not moot the question how far national education should ever have been separated from the national church; but this we do say, that the question of education ought at the present time to awaken all the active energies of the church. If the church is to retain her position in the land; if she is to be the mother of the rising generation, it must be through the personal, individual, and private efforts of her members. We must not look to, or lean upon, public assistance. We must, indeed, avail ourselves of those appliances and aids which are so largely and freely offered; for in proportion as the church gives generously, she will receive generously; the more she enlarges her liberality, the more will she be able to avail herself of government aid.

Beloved brethren, there is one part of this question which is paramount over all the rest, and that is the education and training of those who are to educate and train the children. The master makes or mars the school. It depends upon him more than upon all other aids what will be the influence of education and what the character of those whom he trains; for, as it has been thrillingly and awfully said, it is the example of the parent or the teacher that educates the child far more than the inculcation of certain principles. What are the temper and disposition of the teacher? Is he a spiritually-minded man? Does he win the young by the persuasive eloquence of his consistent life, as well as by instructing them in the path which leads to heaven? If we have not godly teachers, how can we expect to have godly scholars? If we have not teachers, who are sound in the faith, how can we have scholars who are sound in the faith? If we have not teachers who are themselves cherishing faith in Christ, how can we expect that they will teach others to do so?

Now, beloved brethren, this institution which is now rising in a corner of the metropolis, which is rising under, we believe, much prayer and many godly and holy desires on the part of those who are erecting it—this institution contemplates the grand object of training up and qualifying persons selected for their piety and their aptitude to teach, to go forth as masters of the multiplied National and other schools of our country; training them up as attached members of the church, but above all as living members of Christ's universal mystic church; training them up as persons who are well acquainted with their church, and conscientiously attached to it, but above all, as those who will not lower this church by ungodly lives, but elevate it by having their conversation in heaven and leading a heavenly life. When we think of this institution as educating one thousand teachers, and remember that if they send out fifty children in each year they will thus be educating fifty or sixty thousand children, how can we ever estimate the amount of benefit which such an institution may confer on future generations in this land? Can any object be more worthy of the support of the Christian public? Here will be an institution untainted by Tractarian perfidy, an institution for training masters in strict accordance with the formularies and articles of our church, but of our church as scripturally understood, and as containing in her articles, her formularies, and her creeds, the truth, the whole truth, and, as far as uninspired wisdom can accomplish the object, nothing but the truth.

Beloved, with such a case before you we cannot doubt that you will tender to the institution your succour on this occasion; that this congregation will show that they love their church, that they love that Bible, without which the church is but a name, and still more, that they love that Saviour whom the Bible unfolds, and in whom alone the church can confide amid all her trials and difficulties. Therefore, beloved brethren, cheerfully and freely give: you will be giving to yourselves, to the world, and to the church, in God's service, and according to His blessed will.

CHRIST NOT DESTROYING, BUT FULFILLING THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HUGH HUGHES, D.D.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,
ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, JUNE 3, 1849.

Being one of a Course of Lectures on the Sermon on the Mount

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matthew v. 17–20.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets." Thus our Saviour proceeds after the beatitudes or the pronouncements of blessings on His true disciples, and after calling them the "salt of the earth," and "the light of the world." Now the first question that suggests itself, in contemplating this part of His sublime discourse, is what connexion exists between it and the former part—why after pronouncing a blessing on each of several graces or virtues, and declaring their possessors to be "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world," He proceeds to say—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets?" Most interpreters give this answer, that, the Great Teacher insisting upon so many more things as duties, and requiring so far greater degrees of holiness than the people had hitherto been taught, or than appeared to be enjoined, by "Moses and the prophets," and intending to insist on many particulars that *seemed* not to be inculcated in those Divine oracles, the Jews might suspect that He meant to invalidate the authority of the Old Testament, and that to remove, or anticipate, such a suspicion, He hastened to declare—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets." 'Imagine not that I mean to set at nought those sacred Writings which ye hold in deserved veneration, and therefore be not prejudiced against My teaching on that ground.' But I cannot think that such an inference could ever have been drawn from anything He had said, or from anything He was about to say in this discourse. The more probable account of the matter seems to me to be, that the notion of His designing to "destroy the law, and the prophets," was a consequence of the false notion they had of the Messiah's kingdom, which was that of a worldly kingdom, superseding all the kingdoms of the earth. If they thought that His kingdom was to be a worldly kingdom, and to be erected by means of military conquest, and that for the attainment of that end, His followers were to kill, and slay, and fall upon the spoil, and possess themselves of other men's goods and inheritances, the natural inference must have been, that those prohibitions in the law of Moses and the writings of the

prophets against injustice and violence, which so carefully guard men's lives and properties, must be relaxed or abrogated. The false notion, then, which our Saviour is here correcting, is not a notion which men had imbibed, or were in danger of imbibing, in His school, but a notion which they had drawn from other sources, like the erroneous views He had sought to cure in the eight beatitudes. The text, according to this view of its bearing, has a natural connexion with what goes before, and forms a very pertinent transition, to that which follows, the setting forth of the moral law in its purity and perfection. It is as if He had said—' I have been endeavouring to undeceive you, as to your covetous, ambitious, vain, vindictive, unjust, unmerciful, libertine, turbulent, and seditious expectations from the Messiah's kingdom, and to possess you with the opposite qualities of poverty of spirit, penitential seriousness, meekness, righteousness, mercifulness, purity, peaceableness, and patience. And I now proceed to tell you in general, that I intend not to exempt you from obedience to any of the moral obligations enjoined in the law and the prophets. So far from seeking to annul, or even to relax, them, I am resolved by My doctrine, and example, and precepts, to exalt and expand them to a greater height and larger extent, than they have ever occupied before. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."'

Some are of opinion, that this assertion of Christ refers only to the moral law, and, by consequence, to the moral precepts of the prophets, and the whole tenor of His sermon, which very emphatically explains and enforces the rules of morality, gives great probability to that opinion. I think it is true, both of the ceremonial and the moral law, of the predictions, as well as of the ethics of the prophets. It is true with regard to the ceremonial law, that Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil it, as it is true of the predictions of the prophets, that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil them. When a prophecy is answered by the occurrence of the event prophesied, and is thereby removed from the mind as a subject of inquiry or a source of expectation, that prophecy is not destroyed, but fulfilled. When hope ceases, because the thing hoped for is attained, that hope is not destroyed, but fulfilled. When belief is no longer exercised, because the thing believed is seen or felt, that belief is not destroyed, but fulfilled. So when the types, and figures, and shadows of the ceremonial law found their antitypes, and realities, and substances in Christ, and His religion, that law, though it was thenceforward valueless as a handmaid to godliness, was not destroyed, but fulfilled. Its injunctions were as predictions superseded by facts, as the outlines of the painter filled up by the colouring, vigour, life, and beauty of a finished picture.

Did the Jewish prophets speak of a coming Deliverer?—Christ annulled not that prophecy, but fulfilled it in Himself, by becoming a mightier Deliverer than their nation, or perhaps themselves, had ever imagined. Did the Jewish prophets predict the arrival of One that should set up a glorious kingdom?—Christ contradicted not that prediction, but fulfilled it in Himself, by erecting a more glorious empire than had entered into the thoughts or expectations of the people of Israel. Was there under the ceremonial law a magnificent temple, where all the inhabitants of Canaan assembled to worship?—Christ expanded the idea shadowed forth by the edifice on Mount Zion, and built a church wherein all the tribes of our race might worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." Was there an altar of burnt offering there, on which blood was shed and lives sacrificed for the transgressions of Israel?—Christ became Himself both the altar and the offering, and shed His blood and sacrificed His life, and thereby accomplished a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. That was but the shadow—He was the substance; that was but the index—

He was the thing indicated; that was but the sign—He was the thing signified.

"Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the conscience peace
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Took all our sins away—
A sacrifice of nobler name
And higher worth than they."

Was there an altar of incense there, from which clouds of sweet odours and grateful perfumes rose up in honour of Jehovah?—Christ was in His own person an altar, whence ascended the most acceptable incense of prayer and thanksgiving to God—praying for Himself, praying for us, and teaching us how to pray in the manner most agreeable to the Divine will. Did the Jewish high priest once a year, on the great day of atonement, enter the holy of holies, with all the sins of the nation on his head, and there stand before the mercy-seat to supplicate their forgiveness?—Christ having offered up Himself as an all-atoning sacrifice, entered into the holy of holies above, even into heaven itself, and there, before the throne of everlasting compassion, pleading the merits of His inestimable oblation, obtained the gift of pardon for every one that believeth. And if Christ did thus answer both the foretellings and the figures which pointed to the Messiah, then is it true, in regard to the predictions of the one and the ceremonies of the other, that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.

I next observe, with regard to the moral precepts of the prophets and the moral parts of the law, that is, with regard to all the ethics, or rules of holiness of the Old Testament that Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil them. He set not aside one obligation of duty either to God or man. He was a pattern of universal obedience. He worshipped the true God; He kept holy the Sabbath day; He honoured His father and mother; He was exact in observing every one of the ten commandments. Nay, He fulfilled or completed the rules of good conduct and conversation laid down in the Mosaic law and the prophetic writings. He taught and practised them in a sense far more extensive than their literal bearing amounted to, even in a sense that was not confined to words and actions, but in a sense that reached also to the sentiments and feelings, to the thoughts and intents of the heart. Whereas the law of Moses said, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me," "Thou shalt not bow down to the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or the earth beneath or the water under the earth," which might literally be complied with by mere external worship, and by abstinence from idolatry, He declared that to worship acceptably men must "worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Whereas the law said, "Thou shalt not kill," He said unto His followers, "Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Whereas the law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," He said, "Whoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Whereas the law said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself," He said, "Swear not at all, but let your communication be, yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." The law said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" but He said, So far from retaliating insult or injury, "Whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." It was a maxim among the Jews to love their neighbours and to hate their enemies. But He said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them

that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." And not only did He set forth the expansive meaning of the precepts laid down in the law and the prophets; He enforced their observance by more distinct and awful sanctions than men's minds had been accustomed to before. He brought life and immortality clearly to light. He revealed the eternal rewards of obedience and the eternal punishments of transgression. He spoke of the solemnities of a universal judgment when a thorough reckoning should be made and every one should be strictly dealt with according to the thing done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be evil. The natural effect on believers would be to have regard to the future rather than the present, to mind the state of the heart as well as the external life, to live as under the eye of Him who seeth in secret, to obey His commands according to the spirit as well as according to the letter. And not only did He surround the precepts of the law and the prophets with more solemn sanctions: He promised such aid to fallen man as would enable him to exercise obedience to a greater extent and with less imperfection than under any former dispensation. He offered the help of power from above to assist him in the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. He sent the Holy Ghost to enlighten the mind, to soften the conscience, to strengthen the resolution, to weaken temptation, to subdue the sinful will, to controul the unruly passions, and to induce a hearty love and an unfeigned obedience to the law of God. Nay, He made up by His own perfect righteousness what was lacking in His sincere followers. If man fell short, He supplied what was deficient. If man transgressed, He atoned for his sin. If man had by apostacy disabled himself from serving God faithfully, He presented Himself as one of the race of man, who could say without fear of contradiction, that He always did what was well pleasing in His sight; and thus by His sufferings and merits He healed the breach occasioned by the transgression of the law, so that the offended One could henceforth regard the returning offender with entire complacency. How variously and emphatically true then were the great Teacher's words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." Before He came they were comparatively but shadowy outlines. He gave them substance, vigour, and life. He gave expansion to their meaning, He added strength to their sanctions; He imparted light and help to their observers; He was a living antitype to their types, a personified answer to their predictions, and a personified obedience to their commands. He entirely and in all respects fulfilled them.

Our Saviour proceeds to declare the perpetual obligation of the law by a very solemn asseveration! "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." By the words "till all be fulfilled," some understand the fulfilment of all the predictions and the realization of all the figures concerning Christ and His dispensation. But the original literally translated is "*till all things be fulfilled*," whereby we are, I think to understand not till all the parts of the law and the prophets shall be realized, but till all the affairs of this world shall be concluded. We therefore think the words "till all be fulfilled" only a repetition of the former part of the observation, "Till heaven and earth pass." Accordingly the meaning is that the contents of the Old Testament were not to be set aside by the Gospel but were when properly understood to be of perpetual obligation. As though it had been said, "Till heaven and earth pass—till all be fulfilled" or finished—till the final consummation of all

things—till the day of the general resurrection and judgment, the law and the prophets will be in force. Even the ceremonial part will in a spiritual sense be in force. There must still be reliance on an offered sacrifice, even the sacrifice of Christ shadowed forth by that of slain beasts. There must still be the offering of incense, even the incense of prayer and praise. There must still be oblations made unto God, the oblations of a grateful heart, of alms to the poor, of relief to the wretched, of the means of instruction to the ignorant. All the things signified by the temple and its various ceremonials, will be practised in the church of Christ till time shall be no longer. "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" so as not to have a perpetual counterpart in that dispensation of the Messiah at the close of which the heaven shall pass away like a scroll and the earth shall be burned up. And with regard to the moral law, it will not in the slightest degree abate its demands under the reign of the Messiah. It will require a more extensive, a spiritual observance, a very particular observance, too, even as to its minutest parts as indicated by the expressions "jot" and "tittle." "Jot" answers to the smallest letter in the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. "Tittle" represents a thing smaller still, a point, or an interpunction, or corner of a letter. We are hereby taught the regard which our Saviour would have us pay to the very least and most inconsiderable parts of our duty. It is a great error to content ourselves with abstaining from gross sins and not to exercise vigilance against smaller transgressions. God requires our cautious avoidance of the one as well as of the other, and for the very plain and cogent reason that the giving way to the devil in small things prepares the way for larger encroachments of the adversary, and the harbouring of small temptations invites assaults of greater magnitude and peril. A sinful thought indulged brings in a whole train of sinful imaginations, and a train of sinful imaginations sooner or later breaks forth into sinful words and sinful actions so that the only sure way of avoiding great iniquity is to prevent the beginning of evil and continually to keep the soul pure from the least unhallowed sentiment, and the weakest unhallowed desire. Small sins may not appear to lay waste the conscience like great ones. But they defile the man; they indispose him to prayer and devout meditation; they hinder his growth in grace; they put him in peril of making shipwreck of faith. They reduce the difference to next to nothing between him and the hypocrite, who studies only to keep up a decent exterior and cares nothing about inward holiness, fearing the loss of reputation more than the dereliction of principle, dreading the eye of man more than the eye of God. A follower of Christ then must, like a saint of old, have respect to all the Divine commandments, and must have respect to them in their spiritual bearing as well as in their literal sense. He must not because he is a disciple of the Gospel, pay less attention to morality. He must not, because under the Christian dispensation grace abounds, be less active in the cultivation of virtue. He must not, because through Christ there is offered ample pardon for transgression, give way to the slightest deviation from the law. Not an atom of its obligation will vanish during all the Messiah's reign. "Not one jot or one tittle of it shall pass" or become null from this period till the end of time—"till heaven and earth pass away," till all the designs of God's grace and providence in our world be accomplished, "till all be fulfilled."

But, says an objector jealous for the essential and consoling doctrines of the Gospel, if it be so, if the moral law be so binding upon Christians we are yet under the covenant of works, and not under the covenant of grace. How then is Christ's yoke more easy and His burden more light than those which former teachers of religion imposed, or the

original demands of God enjoined? We answer that under the Gospel though the moral law is a rule of duty, it is not the rule of life, of spiritual, of eternal life. Though we break it, we are not, as we should be without redemption, bound up under an inevitable curse—we are not, as we should be without a Mediator, under a sentence that *must* be carried into execution. No: there is pardon offered upon our repenting of transgression and believing in the atonement. There is freedom from the yoke and burden of guilt and terror, and we are by the liberty, wherewith Christ maketh free enabled to walk with comparative ease and cheerfulness in the path of amendment and holiness. And there is another sense in which Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light with regard to the law; in respect, namely, that greater measures of grace are under the Gospel offered to assist in the performance of duty, in the resistance to temptation, and in the endeavour to conform to the will of God and to walk in the way of His commandments. So that Christ's yoke is still easy and His burden light; unspeakably easy as compared to the bondage of pagan superstitions, incalculably light as weighed against the load of Jewish ceremonials, though the believer is required to have careful respect to all the demands of morality, yea, to all the perfection of holiness, and though he be assured that not "one jot or one tittle of the law shall pass" or become null or unmeaning "till heaven and earth pass away, till all be fulfilled."

From this solemn asseveration concerning the perpetual obligation of the law the great Teacher draws the following inference: "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Our Saviour appears here evidently to refer to the Scribes and Pharisees, who made void the commandments of God by their traditions. They disregarded the spirit and attended only to the letter of the law. Nay, they often evaded the letter of the law by corrupt glosses and false interpretations. For justice, mercy, and faith they substituted external forms and ceremonial observances. They set the example of omitting the plainest duties, such as honoring father and mother, under the pretence of doing honor to God, and as the instructors of the nation, they taught men so. Have we not similar practisers and similar teachers in the Christian world? Are there not those who teach that violence and falsehood and perjury may be employed in the service of what they call the true church? Doubtless there are many members of the Romish persuasion who renounce and abhor such a notion. But it cannot be questioned that those of their communion have taught men so. They have broken the commandments of God, which inculcate mutual love among men, and taught others that they might do so in the endeavour to advance the interests of their church. Now of such Christ declares that instead of being regarded as serviceable and acceptable workers in His vineyard, or in the kingdom of heaven on earth, that is, the kingdom of grace, they shall be called, that is, accounted the least in that kingdom. The original is considered by most interpreters as equivalent to saying, they shall not be esteemed subjects of the kingdom of heaven at all. They shall have no part or lot among the true disciples of Christ on earth, and as the awful consequence they cannot hope to arrive at the inheritance of the saints in eternal light. No works of pretended faith, no labours of unscriptural love can supersede the teaching and practise of strict morality. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

"But," continues He, "whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." 'Those who like myself,' He would

say, ' shall insist on the unabated authority of the Divine law, giving an example of obeying it themselves and teaching others to obey it according to its spirit and without reserve or evasion—those will I reckon as the Messiah's true disciples. They shall be honourable in the church of Christ : they shall be great in the kingdom of heaven on earth. While they who shall substitute superstition for religion shall be of no account in the Redeemer's fold—while they who shall pretend to be religious, and be in justice, truth, and charity no better than others, shall not be owned by the great Shepherd of the sheep—while they who shall profess to have faith, and be in practice, careless, worldly, profligate, impure, or dishonest, shall be regarded but as the chaff of His threshing floor, to be burnt up at last with unquenchable fire :—they who shall practise " whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely," adorning their profession by the fruits of holiness,—they shall be reckoned among My precious jewels. And if they not only do these things themselves, if they not only observe the least as well as the greatest of the Divine commandments in their own hearts and lives, but teach others so, and so carry others along with them in the path of holiness and glory, they shall be accounted the most honourable of My subjects, the most precious of My precious jewels—they shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. They shall be great by their example ; they shall be great by their doctrine ; their services to the Messiah will be great : their estimation among the faithful will be great ; their glory in eternity will be unspeakably great ; for being of those who turn many to righteousness they " shall shine in the kingdom of heaven above as the stars for ever and ever."

To enforce His foregoing instruction our Saviour adds, " For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Scribes were the most noted teachers of the law, and the Pharisees the most celebrated professors of it : they had such a reputation, especially the latter class among the people, that the generality of the community did not think themselves obliged to be as good as they. So great was the estimation of their orthodoxy and sanctity, that it was a saying among the Jews, if but two men went to heaven, one of them would be a Pharisee. And yet our Lord tells His disciples that the religion He came to establish did not only exclude the badness, but excel the goodness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Men must excel them in doctrine and excel them in life, or they cannot be true members of His church, true subjects of the kingdom of grace here, and inheritors of the kingdom of glory hereafter.

The Scribes and Pharisees obeyed the commandments in the letter but not in the spirit—they observed what God spake, but not what He intended. They were busy in the outward work of the hand, but regardless of the affections and inclinations of the heart : they would wash their hands, but cared not about purity of spirit : they would give alms, but not love the receiver : they would go to the temple, but not revere the glory that dwelt between the cherubim there : they would offer many prayers, but not strive for the grace implored, nor labour " to perfect holiness in the fear of God." It must not be so with us, if we would be of the Great Shepherd's fold. Our service must not be confined to the outward works and scenes of religion : it must occupy the heart and soul. Again, they are said to have broken Moses' tables into pieces, and, gathering up the fragments, to have taken to themselves what part of duty they pleased, and to have thought themselves justified in neglecting the rest. They taught that God would put our good and bad works into a balance ; and, according to the heavier scale, give a portion in the world to come. Devouring widow's houses, they thought, would be made up by long prayers ;

neglecting father and mother, by oblations on the altar of God ; breaking the obligations of humanity, by advancing the interests of Judaism. But in the righteousness evangelical one duty cannot be exchanged for another, and many virtues cannot make amends for one vice. Our obedience must be universal, our conversation holy, our life in all respects conformable to the life of Christ. We are told also that they relied upon their own righteousness, very imperfect and poor though it was thus proved to be, as a recommendation to the Divine favour and as a ground of hope for salvation. But we, when we have done all that is commanded us, must acknowledge ourselves to be unprofitable servants, and seek a righteousness exceeding our own—even the perfect righteousness of Christ, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The Scribes and Pharisees gave alms to the extent that the letter of the law required : they paid tythes of all they possessed. And this literal obedience to the commandment was called “ righteousness ” as distinguished from the unrighteousness that withheld such obedience. But the charity of the Christian must go beyond this : it must give more than the law requires : it must give willingly and without constraint : it must give abundantly and without niggardliness. “ How much shall I give in charity ? ” said some one to an old father of the church : he replied, “ How much is the amount of your sinfulness ? how much do you owe to God ? what is the repayment due to Him who when rich for your sake became poor ? If you can compute that, let there be bounds and measures to your charity.” And so, brethren, may we say to you, if you think you have already done enough in requital of the mercies of God, especially that singular and unspeakable mercy of giving His Son to live on earth to teach you, and to die on the cross to save you, then withhold your hand from works that require liberality of heart. But if that mercy is in value incalculable, and if from that mercy there flows to you a perpetual stream of temporal and spiritual blessings, then must your charity never fail : then must you think it a blessed privilege to give on every occasion all that you can spare to God. Say not, we have far too many calls on our bounty now-a-days—say rather, we have so many motives to gratitude that we must never be weary in well-doing. If you should say, charity is asked of us now almost every Sabbath—I reply, mercies are showered upon you oftener still. And if we should ask you to give to God every day, we should not appear unreasonable when we reminded you that you say unto Him, “ Give us this day our daily bread. Give not then, like the Scribes and Pharisees, according to any prescribed rule, or according to your neighbour’s example, but give ye from the heart as unto Him, to whom you owe a debt immense of endless gratitude. So shall your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and so shall ye prove yourselves to belong to the kingdom of heaven ; to be the subjects of the kingdom of grace here ; the inheritors of the kingdom of glory hereafter.

THE "GOOD CONFESSION."

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, D.D.

PREFACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS, CHARTERHOUSE, GOSWELL ST.
ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 10, 1849.

"Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God"—1 John iv. 15.

Your contributions are solicited, my brethren, this day, to the schools of St. Thomas, Charterhouse. The efficiency of these Schools is great—the numbers that have been admitted into them since their opening in 1847 being, of boys 1,042, of girls and infants 1,481; and let me add, that this success is the more gratifying, because, as the parents are required to make a small payment, it is evident that the education offered is valued by them. That they will be conducted on truly Christian principles, you have a guarantee in the confidence you have in your respected pastor and the committee associated with him; and from the deportment of the children, as exhibited to us this day by so large a number, we may all of us gather, that the instruction given to them is given on a proper system, and that they are well trained. The necessities of the schools are great. They are intended for the children of a very poor populous district. They are full to overflowing; so that, in confidence in your liberality on this occasion, another room has been engaged by your excellent pastor, in addition to the boys' school. The district, I say, is a poor one, and therefore, if there are any strangers present to-day, as there generally are whenever a charity sermon is preached, they are earnestly requested to give liberally, bearing in mind that the inhabitants of the district are workmen employed in the city, where your money is made and where they cannot find a lodging, the houses being generally let as counting-houses, or being so high in rent as to preclude them from the occupation of them. And these Schools are established—for what purpose? To train up these children to the confession of the Christian faith.

The faith of the Christian is briefly stated in that passage of St. John which I have selected for our text, because it is one of the many passages in the services of this day which seemed to be applicable to our present circumstances. It occurs, you will recollect, in the epistle. What is needful in this respect for these children, is needful for us all; and having now called upon you to support these Schools, I shall proceed to exhort you, as well as these children, to the care of your immortal souls. We are, old and young, one with another, to "confess that Jesus is the Son of God." Thus, you will remember, is that "good confession," which St. Paul tells us that Christ Jesus "witnessed before Pontius Pilate," and for confessing which He was condemned by the Jews and crucified by the Romans. Deeply interesting it will be, to examine this point in some detail. While we learn therefrom to adore our Lord and Master, we may be profited by contemplating the conduct of the Jews and of Pontius Pilate. May the Spirit of our God be specially present to our souls, when we proceed to such a consideration as this:

Now the Jews possessed a law, not derived from the deductions of human reason, but given by God himself, and given in its perfection, among other reasons, doubtless from this preeminently, that they might have the means of testing the pure and spotless character of their Messiah, and of exhibiting it to the world. Had the Jews received the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Jewish authorities would have established triumphantly His innocence, His spotless purity and sinless virtue, by a reference to the law, the requirements of which to the very letter He observed. Had they done this thing willingly, verily they would have had their reward; but their hearts were perverse, their eyes were blinded, and they determined not to receive the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, the will of God was not to be frustrated. Though they would not conduct the process as free agents, they were still to be used as blind instruments in the hand of Providence, pronouncing the innocence of the Messiah by the very means resorted to in their malignity for His condemnation. The high priest asks Jesus and His disciples of His doctrine, but they establish no charge against Him. "The chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death, but found none." They sought evidence, by distorting which they might find opportunity to condemn Him; but they sought in vain. How strict must have been their scrutiny, when "the chief priests and elders and all the council were seeking for evidence against Him, yet found none!" My brethren, remember these chief priests, these elders, these Jewish rulers, if at any time, carried away by party feeling, you are tempted to look out for grounds of accusation against any one—to seek for evidence to damage his character, careless whether it be false witness or not, so long as it be witness sufficient to serve your purpose, that purpose, though disguised, being in fact a malignant purpose—on such an occasion, my brethren, remember the rulers ecclesiastical and civil of the Jews, and remember them so as to dread the consequences of your conduct in this world and the next. The careless promulgator of a falsehood against another, is only one degree less criminal than the malignant fabricator. Let the only ends you aim at be those of truth; never forgetting, that between the cause of God and of truth there can be no separation or divorce, and that in employing falsehood to further even an end which you conceive to be good, you are really doing the devil's work.

The Jewish rulers, in seeking for evidence against our Lord, while they thought to answer the purposes only of faction and malice, became in fact the witnesses, the asserters, and the promulgators to endless ages of His spotless character and of His unimpeachable innocence. The Lord Jesus was declared by the legal authorities, ere the time of His sacrifice arrived, to be "a Lamb without blemish and without spot." When the Jewish authorities perceived that they could establish no charge against our Lord, they determined to compel Him to criminate Himself. Their purpose was malignant; as free agents they were doing a work of darkness; but still they were in another sense instruments in God's hands, instruments in the hands of an overruling Providence, to establish the fundamental truth of the Divinity of their Messiah. Their course was craftily devised. If the Lord Jesus was the Christ, He must, according to prophecy, be what we confess Him to be, the Son of God. Now, although the truth of there existing a trinity of persons in the one Godhead was not clearly revealed to them as it is to us, yet we know, from the eighteenth verse of the fifth chapter of St. John, what the Jews meant by "the Son of God." We are told that "the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." From the intimations of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament, they doubt-

less arrived at this conclusion, without any accurate apprehension of the truth. If, then, He who was standing before them, "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," was to declare Himself to be the Son of God, in that sense in which they would put the question, the only begotten Son, equal with the Father, all those who looked at the apparently powerless, but truly Divine Prisoner, would concur in pronouncing Him to be guilty of blasphemy, and the penalty of blasphemy was death. The chief priests therefore held a conversation concerning Him; and they brought our Lord before them, and the high priest said unto Him, administering to Him the most solemn oath that could be taken—"I adjure thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Our blessed Lord answered emphatically in the affirmative; adding, as if to make all doubting impossible—"Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man," rejected and despised though He now be, "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." My brethren, our Lord was condemned to be guilty of death by the Jewish Sanhedrim—why? Because they said He uttered blasphemy. His blasphemy was—what? He declared Himself to be the Son of God. But if this was said in a figurative sense, it was not blasphemy; the Jews would not have accounted it blasphemy. The words were used in the same sense in which they were understood (as we have seen) by the Jews. Our Lord declared Himself to be the Son of God in such sense as to make Himself equal with the Father.

Now the Lamb of God, having been declared by the legal authorities to be "without spot and blemish," and having declared Himself to be the Son of God, equal with the Father as touching His Godhead, though visibly inferior as touching His manhood, was led away, that while employing wicked men as His instruments and executors, He might offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. But it pleased God to grant us double evidence on these two important points, and to ordain that our Lord should be tried twice for the same offence. The Jews did not at that time possess the power of life and death; they had therefore to send the Divine Victim to Pontius Pilate, for him to carry their sentence into effect. Pontius Pilate might have given the order for our Lord's execution, the sentence having been pronounced against Him according to the Jewish law, without troubling himself with any investigation into the case; but the mercy of God was such, that He did not use Pontius Pilate as a blind instrument for the accomplishment of His will, until He had afforded him an opportunity of acting freely, according to the dictates of conscience through which God spake to him and warned him of the danger. Oh! my brethren, how awful is the sin of which we are guilty, if from any motive, or to serve any interests of our own, we resist the voice of God within us, and do any actions which we know to be wrong! When our difficulties and temptations are unusually great, the voice of conscience within us is, by the mercy of a good God, unusually strong. The voice of conscience spake in Pilate's breast; he might have heard of the mighty and wonderful works and miracles of our Lord; the eyes of the Jews had been upon Him, and Pilate knew how cautiously He had avoided every appearance of evil, not permitting even His good to be evil spoken of. Pilate might have known, that if our Lord had offered any incitement to insurrection, with any hope of success, the Jews would have been His supporters. But not a shadow of a charge could be substantiated against the Holy One and Just. Pilate determined, therefore, instead of giving immediate orders for our blessed Lord's

execution, to do what he had an undoubted right to do ; he converted his tribunal into a court of appeal, evidently, from what transpired, thinking that our Lord would urge before him the injustice of the proceedings of the Jewish council. At the proceeding, which was not usual, the Jews were evidently indignant. When Pilate intimated that he should take the case into his own hands, by asking, "What accusation bring you against this Man?"—they "answered and said, If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him unto thee." 'We have tried Him and condemned Him as a malefactor—that ought to be sufficient ; we bring Him before thee, not to be tried, but that thou mayest order the execution of One tried already and condemned.' Pontius Pilate, tampering with his conscience, being unwilling, on the one hand, to offend the Jews, and fearing, on the other, to share in the guilt of shedding innocent blood, proposed to waive his right as the Roman governor, and told the Jews that they might take their Divine Prisoner and deal with Him according to their law. The Jewish authorities were too wary to consent to this, though Pilate might have connived at their conduct, had they consented to stone our Lord ; but there were higher authorities still, who might bring them to account, and they therefore said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Our blessed Lord's trial was, therefore, to commence. It seems to have been the Divine will, that the Lamb of God should be pronounced without spot or blemish, by the Gentile authorities as well as the Jewish, by the state as well as by the church. And these accusers seem to have shrunk from bringing forward the real charge against Him, until they were as a last resource compelled to do it. The first was—"We found this fellow :"—oh ! my brethren, how immeasurable was the depth of the humiliation of the Son of God, when He permitted His creatures to speak of Him thus ! And how painful it is to us, even to read these words, when we remember that He was humbled that we might be exalted ; He was disgraced, that we might be honoured ; He was "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," that He might be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities"—that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him," that "by His stripes" we might be "healed." His persecutors had already reviled Him, persecuted Him and spit upon Him ; and they now said—"We found this Fellow perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He himself was Christ the King." Now here was a plain and tangible charge. Pontius Pilate examined our Lord ; he was fully satisfied that our Lord, in asserting that He was the Christ, did not assert His kingly power in any such sense as the Jews suggested. No proof was attempted except an inference from a surmise, that He had forbidden to give tribute to Cæsar. The contrary might be quite clearly shown. Pilate, therefore, after the examination, went out and said to the people, "I find no fault in this Man." The chief priests accused our Lord of many offences. Still, though our Lord would not utter a word in His own defence, or appeal from the Jewish Sanhedrim to the Roman tribunal, the Jewish authorities were unable to substantiate any one of those many charges. This only made them, says St. Luke, "more fierce :—" "more fierce"—for what ? My brethren, these men were more fierce, because it was found that they hated innocence. Were these men singular in their conduct—singular in their own age, or singular in any age ? No, my brethren, this is a representation of unregenerate, unrenewed, unsanctified human nature. Mark how desperately wicked human nature is, and you will cease to wonder at the need of an atonement to effect our salvation—of the need that man should be regenerated by the Spirit of God, created anew, before he can be received into the Divine favour.

The Jewish authorities, I said, became more fierce, saying, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." Again did Pontius Pilate tamper with his conscience. Hearing of Galilee, he sent our Lord to Herod, who was also at Jerusalem at that time—Galilee being under Herod's jurisdiction, and hoping that Herod therefore would take upon himself the responsibility of condemning the prisoner. But the result was the same. Though the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused our Lord before a hostile tribunal, nothing could be proved against Him; so that Pilate, when our Lord was brought back from Herod, spake to the chief priest and rulers of the people, and publicly declared that neither he nor Herod could, after examination, find any fault in our blessed Lord, touching those things whereof He had been accused. In his anxiety to spare our Lord, Pontius Pilate appealed from the Jewish authorities to the people. The people, he knew, had a few days before received our Lord with hosannahs. As it was customary to release a prisoner at the Passover, Pilate offered to release our Lord. The people, however, offended because our Lord was not condemned, and incited by the chief priests and elders, demanded the release of Barabbas, and with savage yell called for the crucifixion of our Lord. Pilate having already tampered with his conscience, even though by the mercy of God warned by a message from his wife to have nothing to do with our Lord, as she had suffered many things in a dream that night because of Him, and having received many extraordinary warnings in many extraordinary ways, Pilate, tampering with his conscience, now began to waver in his sense of justice, and to seek a compromise. My brethren, we are never safe, unless we listen to conscience when first it speaks to us. If once we tamper with our conscience, the devil will take good care to provide the means for making our descent into the depths of sin easy and imperceptible.

Pilate's sense of justice, I say, began to waver, and he sought a compromise. He said unto the Jews a third time, when they were saying of the Lord Jesus "Crucify Him, crucify Him,"—he said, "Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." Pilate, had openly declared that he not only found no cause of death in our Lord, but "no fault in Him." Where, then, was his sense of justice, when he offered, not to crucify, but to chastise, to scourge, an innocent man? The trial of Pontius Pilate was now over. He yielded. He had, in fact, resisted the appeals of his conscience. The question now was only as to the degree of guilt he was to incur. He who would deliver an innocent man up to be scourged, only required to be more strongly pressed to deliver him up to death. My brethren, let us be careful to stand by our principles, whatever they are. When once we give up a principle, to do what we think is expedient, we take the first step towards our moral degradation. The question of expediency is one which, in a variety of ways, must occur, and in doubtful cases we are to do what commends itself to our judgment as most expedient; but whenever principle intervenes, the question of expediency is annihilated. It would only be a fair question, and to be decided according to certain notions of what may be expedient, whether Pilate should have turned a robber and a murderer, like Barabbas, upon the people; he might have freely debated, whether it were a less evil to exasperate the people, or to turn such a man loose upon society. This was a question of expediency; but there ought to have been no question as to the scourging of a person whom he knew to be innocent. This was not a question of expediency, but of right and wrong, concerning which there could be no doubt. When Pilate,

therefore, offered to chastise our Lord, he had yielded to the temptation to which he had been exposed, and was an unjust man. But still, even after he had caused our Lord to be scourged, Pilate made one more effort to rescue Him from death. We see here the workings of Providence. The real cause of our Lord's death, namely, the assertion of His Divinity, was to be fully proclaimed—to be proclaimed before the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Two things were to be distinctly asserted—first, that our Lord was without spot or blemish, and secondly, that He was condemned to death for the fact of asserting that He was, as He ever has been and ever will be, the Son of God, "equal with the Father as touching His Godhead." "Pilate went forth the last time, and said unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth unto you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him." Then it was that at last the Jews brought forward the real charge against Him, and stated the true cause of His condemnation. "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because" (here is the reason assigned,)—"because He made Himself the Son of God."

Oh! my brethren, you perceive why it was that the sinless Jesus was condemned. He was condemned for that "good confession" which we ourselves are called upon to confess. He was condemned for asserting His Divinity—for asserting which His followers are still maligned, when they declare in the words of the creed, "that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching His Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching His Manhood. Who although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God; one altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

This is, in substance, that "good confession" which our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ witnessed before the Jewish Sanhedrim and Pontius Pilate; this, in substance, is that confession to which St. John exhorts us, in the words of our text and in the epistle of this day. This is He whom Pilate delivered up to the will of the Jews, and caused to be crucified. He "knew not what he did." The Jews who demanded the crucifixion of our Lord, "knew not what they did." The soldiers, who affixed our Lord to the cross, "knew not what they did." Pontius Pilate thought he merely yielded to the exigencies of the time, and had done what was politic and apparently of no great moment. The Jews thought, in the words of their high priest, that it was expedient for the public peace that Jesus should be put to death. The soldiers thought they had only performed an ordinary action, in carrying into execution the sentence of the law. They all supposed that they had merely doomed to death and merely executed "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," one "rejected and despised," who while living "had not where to lay His head." They knew not what they did, when, in crucifying the lowly Jesus, they crucified the only begotten Son of God. They did a deed which, trivial and insignificant as it seemed to the interests around them, shook the universe to its centre, and shall in its consequences be felt when time shall be no more, and when in eternity the redeemed in Christ shall rejoice in glory.

They sinned ; they deserved punishment for their sin ; but the extent of their sin they knew not then, and in this world never knew. They knew not its consequences, awful to themselves, because to them "a savour of death unto death ;" they knew not the consequences of their sinful act to others—consequences, though undesigned and unintended by them, of everlasting benediction and blessing, through the agency of Him who bringeth good out of evil, and compelleth devils and diabolical men, while seeking the indulgence of their own passions, nevertheless to carry on His designs. They first gave themselves to Satan, then they were used as instruments in the hands of the Almighty God. They contributed, indeed, to the doing a deed by which the universe has been blessed, but they contributed to it only as the spikes and the nails contributed to it, when used to affix the Redeemer to the cross ; and as the nails, damaged in their use, were cast away, so, after being used by Omnipotence, the Jewish rulers, Pontius Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, were consigned to the punishment which, as free agents, who disregarded the voice of conscience, they deserved. They knew not what they did. Sinner ! dost thou know what thou art doing—thou, who art indulging in some known sin—thou, who art habitually sinning ? What may be the consequence, not to thyself alone, but to others, of the slightest deviation from the law of God !—think of this. No sin is a little sin ; no sin, therefore, in itself is venial—everlasting consequences are involved in its commission. It is but a little thing apparently, when a serpent puts its sting into the human body ; a scarcely perceptible aperture is made ; but through that little aperture, made by that little sting, death diffuses itself through the human frame. It is but a little thing, that scarcely perceptible spark ; but that little spark, applied to a train of gunpowder, may be the death of thousands. Oh ! who can calculate upon the consequences of what men will call a single little sin !

My brethren, are any of you sick in body or sad in heart ? Are you depressed with care and bowed down with woe ? Are we not all of us dying men ? Are not men "born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards ?" And whence all this ? Oh ! whence this misery in a world of woe, which we are all of us at some period doomed to ? Whence, but through what would-be philosophers account a thing so trivial, so little, that we excite derision for attributing to it consequences so overwhelmingly awful ? Whence, but to the fact, that our first parents ate the forbidden fruit, not knowing what they did ? That little sin was a sting to human nature which poisoned our race, and made us in Adam as dead men. *It was the spark, the little spark, that caused the conflagration of the world.* Our first parents knew not what they did ; but the deed they did, brought Heaven in mercy down to earth, to save the bodies that had been poisoned, and to rescue from perdition that race which had been condemned to death. The sacred Three in the one Godhead did (as it were) take counsel. The voice of the everlasting Father was heard in heaven—"Who shall stand in the gap, endure the punishment that sin deserves, and become the channel of mercy the winner needs, to bring him back to God ?" The eternal Son responded, "a body being prepared for Him"—"Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will." He came, and was crucified by those who knew not what they did ; He came, and "died for our sin and rose again for our justification ;" He came, to receive into glory those who by faith are united with Him ; He came, the great Physician, to heal that mystical body which sin had poisoned ; He came, to rescue from the ruins of a ruined race all who accept His proffered salvation ; He came to be "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

My brethren, when these facts are presented to us, dare we to say of any sin, "Is it not a little one?" What may be the everlasting consequences of what appears to man to be the slightest sin, it is impossible to surmise. My brethren, the slightest offence, what suffering it has already caused! When our God incarnate suffered; when the Son of God, omniscient as God, though suffering as man, endured an agony as God-man, the extent of which we cannot imagine, He did so, doubtless because to Him was then present every sin of every man for whom He was making an atonement. In averting from the penitent sinner the consequences resulting from his ignorance and his negligence, He agonised so that "His sweat was (as it were) great drops of blood." Remember, ye who rejoice in your justification, though your sin, repented of, shall not be your everlasting ruin, remember the pang that it cost the Son of God. Remember also, that the consequences of your sin may be even now to retard your Lord's return for the establishment of His kingdom of glory. How far the sins of Christians may have retarded, and may be retarding our Lord's return, even though the penitent offender know not what he doeth, it will be impossible for us to conjecture; only let the reflection, that unknown consequences do result from our known sins, and great consequences from actions seemingly of little importance, let this make us very careful, very watchful how we walk, lest we stumble.

Let us, my brethren, accept with boldness the truth made known to us, and confess with gratitude that Jesus is the Son of God. Let us confess it in that sense in which the fact was confessed by our Lord Himself before the Jewish Sanhedrim and Pontius Pilate—in that sense in which it was understood by the Jews. Will you do this? When we are exhorting you to do this, we at the same time bid you to take warning of Pontius Pilate. His sin was very different from that of the Jewish rulers and people; his sin was that weakness of character, induced or confirmed by a long indulgence in the sin of selfishness. That sin incapacitated him from resisting evil, or from persevering in the course which his reason or his conscience persuaded him to adopt. What does the apostle say? "Add to your faith virtue;" or, as the word ought to be rendered to express the sense of the original, "manliness." After believing, acquire a manliness of character. Act up to your principles. If living in a civilised day, amidst all the arts of moral persecution, in ridicule, in the contempt of worldly men, in the misrepresentations and calumnies of opponents, have the manliness to abide by your principles, and to confess in all respects that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Remember, when you are tempted to depart from your principles, to belie your convictions from the fear of man, or from a regard to your worldly interests, remember at such time Pontius Pilate. Remember, how he, though most desirous to save One in whom he could find no fault, through want of manliness became a murderer; yea, not knowing what he did, he became the murderer of the Son of God, the God incarnate. Remember, on the other hand, the Son of God himself. Remember how, before the Sanhedrim and Pontius Pilate, when suffering for your sakes, He "witnessed a good confession." Remember His united meekness and firmness, His discrimination, forbearance, and fortitude. Remember that He who thus suffered and witnessed this good confession, though your Elder Brother, is also your God; and in all your dangers and conflicts, the conflicts of your Christian warfare, you can look to Him, and He will strengthen your hearts. In all the trials and temptations of this mortal state rely upon Him, and from His presence streams of refreshment shall flow to your souls; and when, strengthened by His grace, ye have confessed Him before men, He will confess you, and will not be ashamed of you, before your Father which is in heaven.

THINGS ETERNAL WEIGHED AGAINST THINGS TEMPORAL.

A Sermon,

BY THE

REV. HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

PREACHED IN ST. BRIDE'S CHURCH, FLEET STREET,
ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 17, 1849.

Before making a Collection in behalf of the St. Bride's Infant School

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Corinthians iv. 18.

THERE are two ways, we think, in which to consider and make good these assertions of the apostle in reference to "things which are seen" and "things which are not seen." We may speak of the former as temporal and of the latter as eternal in two different ways, either as they are in themselves or as they are possessed by us. The "things which are seen" may be temporal in themselves; or, if they are not thus transient, our connection with them may come wholly to an end, so that they may have no permanence to ourselves, whatever the lengthened period of their duration. In like manner, the "things which are not seen" may be eternal both because they are never themselves to have an end, and because our connection with them is never to terminate. We suppose that it may be useful in discoursing on this passage to consider what is temporal, and, what eternal, under both these points of view.

So that we have two statements to examine, and each is to be considered under two points of view. In the first place, we have to speak to you of "things which are seen" as "temporal," either in regard to themselves or in regard to us their possessors; in the second place, we have to consider under a similar two-fold application the saying that "the things which are not seen are eternal."

And, first, then, you have before you the record of a great appointment, including whatsoever is visible, and sentencing it to dissolution and extinction. "The things which are seen are temporal." Is it, then, so, that the glorious and mighty fabric of the material universe is to last only for a time; that this solid earth, and those worlds upon worlds which we behold from its surface, have in them the elements of decay, and are at length to disappear from the firmament? Is there nothing permanent in all that stupendous machinery which rolls at the bidding of the Divine artificer? Have there only a few centuries, perhaps only a few years, to elapse, and then shall the whole be taken down, and star after star and system after system shrink into original nothingness? We must be careful that we do not overstrain the apostle's expression, or so interpret it as to do violence to other portions of Scripture. There may be much room for questioning whether there will be the actual annihilation of matter; whether even this earth is to be so destroyed that no vestige of it shall remain. It is certain that St. Paul could not have meant to affirm that whatever is material will only be temporal; for we know, at least, that our bodies are not to be annihilated, but that, having gone through certain processes, they are to be reunited to the soul, and remain in that reunion for ever. Without, however, supposing the actual annihilation of what we now behold, we may speak of the universe as destined to be destroyed, seeing that the systems which are to succeed to the present will be wholly different and wear all the traces of a new

hilated, or whether it is to be lost in new shapes and combinations, provided only that in either case there is to be so complete a removal of the existing system of things that the earth and the heavens may be said to "flee away before the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne." This certainly suffices to affix a temporal character to all that is seen, and therefore to vindicate the apostle's statement in our text. And upon this we would fasten your attention. We would have you regard the whole surrounding universe, massive and abiding as it seems, as destined to crumble into powder on some approaching day of terror and of wonder, to become as "the chaff of the summer threshing-floor" when the Lord shall arise in His majesty and sweep away evil from His empire. It is not because for century after century the heavens have been hung with stars, and planets in majestic march have performed their unvarying revolutions, and seasons have followed each other in regular succession, it is not on these accounts to be concluded that there will be no such interruption of the existing order of things as is supposed in the assertion of our text. This would only be to take up the language and argument of the scoffers whose appearance is predicted by St. Peter, and who are to exclaim, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." The long unbroken continuance of the present economy is no proof that there is not to come a change; for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day," and the sentence has gone forth—a sentence from which nothing material is excluded, a sentence on the mighty constellations of the firmament as well as on our own frail bodies, on the mountains, the forests, and the floods of this creation as well as on the insignificant insect, fixing limits to the duration both of the vast and the inconsiderable, the durable and the fragile; so that the immense universe, in all its departments, is to be turned at length into its own tomb, though the tomb, like that in which human dust must sleep, is to give up its dead, that they may be remoulded and reanimated. Wonderful contemplation! We have been accustomed to distinguish between what we count fleeting and what we regard as enduring, between the rock and the mountain, the flower and the moth. There are certain objects to which we are wont to ascribe permanence, and which enable us to assign dates and periods to less stable things, but which are not themselves exempt from decay. Who, as he gazes on the troop of glorious worlds which form the retinue of night, does not feel as though there were moving and bounding before him and around him messengers from a past eternity and heralds of a future—mysterious visitants who have looked upon this earth whilst generation after generation has arisen and declined, and who will still shine serenely when children's children are gathered to the tomb? Upon much that is earthly we can see traces of decay, which almost prepare us to expect dissolution; but the heavens, with their brilliant and interminable throng of stars, appear for ever the same. No storms displace any portion of their lustre; history brings us no rumour of a change; and it seems hardly credible, that there is yet to be a day when even as the dry leaves drop from the fig-tree shall the hosts of heaven be shrivelled up and fall. But so it is; all, all is temporal; and I know not what is to give us so august and overpowering an idea of God, or to put so impressively the mark of comparative worthlessness on every created good, as the assurance that whatsoever is seen has an appointed termination? Is it not, I ask, a confounding thought, that by a simple effort of His will the Almighty is to unhinge and dislocate the amazing mechanism of the universe, sweep away myriads upon myriads of stupendous worlds, and yet remain Himself the great "I am," the same when stars and planets fall as when, in far back time, they first blazed at His command? Who amongst us does not feel rebuked by the truth now presented to our attention, if indeed he be living in preference of the objects of sight to the objects of faith? Man of pleasure! go on delighting thyself with things which gratify the senses; man of learning! continue to neglect the wis-

dom which is from above, and account thyself knowing because acquainted with certain laws and phenomena of nature ; man of *avarice* ! persist in digging for the gold, and consume thy days and nights in labours to become rich ; man of ambition ! still toil for distinction and spare no sacrifice which may gain a higher title ; but know, all ye worshippers of visible things, that, immortal yourselves, you are cherishing as your portion what is finite and perishable. Appointed yourselves to an endless duration, ye place your happiness in objects which are to last for a time and then wholly to disappear ; so that you must be left with all the soul's mighty capacities empty, without a shred of the material whence now ye seek your chief good. Yes, it is indeed a demonstration of the incalculable disproportion between the soul and those objects with which worldly men attempt to satisfy its desires, when we can write "perishable, perishable," upon all that is material ; when, on the authority of the living God, we can predict a day "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up ;" when, in short, the flames of one universal conflagration shall make good this emphatic declaration—"The things which are seen,"—yea all of them—"are temporal."

But we observed to you that there was another sense in which this declaration might be taken, regard being had to the shortness of our own lives rather than to the finite duration of all visible things. It may be that such a representation as we have just laid before you, however powerfully it may address itself to the imagination, is not the most calculated to weaken the hold which the objects of sight so readily gain upon the heart. It may be that you will say—if not feel, *you will say*, 'The things which are seen may thus be only temporal ; but they have existed for centuries past, and will probably continue for centuries to come, and where the duration is so immense there is nothing very affecting to the mind in proving that it is not infinite.' Let us descend, therefore, to lower ground, and meet you where, if there be not matter for such sublime contemplation, there is, perhaps, for what is more touching and more practical. Even if there were never to come the appointed change over the visible universe, if the sun were never to be extinguished or the earth to be consumed, ye cannot deny that so far as yourselves are concerned the things which are seen would be emphatically temporal. There comes a day, neither can it be a very distant day to any one in this assembly, when our connection with earth must be terminated by death ; when the sun must rise on us for the last time, though millions of cheerful eyes will hail his rising on the morrow. It is not that the stars will have been withdrawn from the heavens, that the mountains will have crumbled, the waters have been dried up : still shall the firmament be richly spangled, and still shall the landscape spread its varied beauty. But we shall be shrouded in darkness, and have no consciousness of the glory which still breathes and burns in creation. For a few days or weeks our decease may cause a void in the circle in which we have been accustomed to move ; but even this will soon be filled, while in the great family and mechanism of nature there will be no effect produced by our being gathered to our fathers. The sun will shine as brightly, and the flowers bloom as sweetly, and the birds sing as cheerily. It is a very affecting thing to those who have just watched the last struggle of one whom they dearly loved to look out on the joyous face of nature, and to see that everything goes on unaffected by their loss. They do well to darken their windows ;—the trees and the stars and the rivers have no sympathy with them ; they wave and sparkle and foam as though it were nothing to the inanimate creation that the happiness of a household had been suddenly crushed.

But will ye not allow, that, inasmuch as there is to be this total separation between you and "the things which are seen," these things are to be called "temporal," whatever their duration ? And since, however attractive, however desirable, however gratifying these things may be, it is unavoidable

that our connection with them must be brief and our separation from them final, will ye not confess that it cannot be the part of wisdom to place our affections on them, and to devote our days to their acquisition? Indeed, the simple consideration that we must soon die, and the sense that we can take nothing with us from this earth, ought to suffice to persuade us of the great madness of living to the present instead of the future. And yet we hardly know how it comes to pass, but so it unquestionably is, that men can listen with a more than common apathy to discourses on the probable nearness of death, and that the preacher seldom seems to make so little way with the mass of his audience as when endeavouring to rouse the consciousness of their own frailty and mortality. Whether it be that men doggedly shut themselves up in the determination not to be disturbed by unpleasant forebodings, or that they regard all discourses on the uncertainty of life as common-place declamation to which it is not worth while to listen, we are well convinced that the preacher can hardly take a subject, in speaking on which he will make a less general impression than when arguing the folly of living for present things from the precariousness of our tenure of them. And, nevertheless, it is a mode of arguing which ought to be overwhelming, leaving no place for subterfuge, and asking nothing but an admission of our own mortality. If we come down to any one of yourselves who is actually engrossed with worldly objects and preach to him, and preach to him, as it were, over the shroud and the coffin, we take the course which ought to be, on all just calculations, the most effectual. It is not that we depreciate that which he prizes, for this might rouse his indignation and leave him to count us no fair judges of the things which he sought. We give him the whole benefit of the supposition that there is an actual worth in all the objects of his pursuit; at least, we will not inflame all his prejudices by entering into debate to show that they are barren and unsatisfying. We ply him simply with the fact that these things are but "temporal" in respect to him, whatever they may be in themselves; and though he might show a languid attention if we referred only to some great change which was to pass over the universe, ought he not to hearken with the most excited and interested feelings as we derive the temporal character of all material good from the certainty of his own dissolution? We will not argue with the sensualist in the midst of the fascinating objects wherein he delights; we will not argue with the miser whilst the gold is glittering before him; we will not argue with the philosopher as the broad arch of the heavens fixes his study; but we will argue with them all amid the graves of a churchyard, filled with the dead of all ages and of all ranks. Come with us for a moment into the sacred enclosure, and then learn feelingly the emphasis of our text. That tomb!—it is that of an opulent merchant. He made thousands, and then could carry nothing away with him of all that he had accumulated. Yonder proud marble!—it marks the resting-place of one who attained high rank. He wore stars and ribbons, and then left them for a winding-sheet. Beneath your feet is the dust of a voluptuary. He thought nothing worth living for but pleasure; he took his fill, and was then stripped of every power of enjoyment. This stone covers a man of science. He delighted in searching after knowledge; the planets were his companions, the mysteries of nature his pastime; and, having stored his mind with a varied erudition, he was hurried into a world of which he had gained no intelligence. Tread lightly on that turf; something like homage is due even to the dust of what was once lovely and virtuous. It is the idol of her parents on whom that grass grows, and she was all that parent's heart could wish—a vision of the morning, radiant and formed to shed blessings on all around her. The parents garnered up their souls in her; she was their all, their only one; they never seemed to think that she could die; but the spoiler came, and in a moment they were childless. We need not continue our progress through this melancholy spot; but will any one of you go away from the churchyard unimpressed with the feeling that all created good can be

enjoyed but for a short time, and that, therefore, it is not the good which should engage the affections of creatures appointed for immortality? Knowing, as ye must know, that what happened to those whose epitaphs ye have just been reading must happen to yourselves, will ye resort to the pursuit of riches, or of pleasure, or of science or of honour, just as though you had had no demonstration that "the world passeth away, and the fashion thereof?" Will ye not rather, though ye be not affected as the vision rises before you of the pillars of the universe tottering, and of one terrific flame enwrapping the heavens and the earth—will ye not withdraw from the sanctuary with the conviction, and show that it is influential in your daily practice, that "the things which are seen" are indeed only "temporal?"

Let us now, however, turn briefly to the other part of the apostle's assertion. We have examined the statement that "the things which are seen are temporal;" let us now turn to that by which it is followed, or opposed,—that "the things which are not seen are eternal." It is very evident that St. Paul's design was to fix the general character of the objects of faith as distinguished from the objects of sight—the character of permanent as distinguished from that of declining and perishing. And, perhaps, it would be a sufficient vindication of the contrast which he draws, if we were merely to show that the things on which a true Christian sets his affections are things of which he cannot be deprived, whilst the things which are prized by the worldling are such as can be only for a short time enjoyed. Yet it cannot be unlawful that we should take the phrase in a somewhat larger sense—that as we before gathered under the definition of "things temporal" the material universe with all its mechanism, so we should now gather under the definition of "things eternal" the invisible world with all its inhabitants.

Who can hear of "things not seen," and not immediately feel his thoughts turn to that amazing and glorious Being of whom it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time;" "He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto?" Thou, O God! art indeed eternal; "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end." We speak of other things besides God as "eternal"—of "eternal happiness," "eternal life;" but it is only when we use the term of God that we use it in its large and unqualified sense; it is only of God that we can affirm the absence of all beginning as well as of all end. Other beings besides God may have never to end, but none other has never commenced. And we must again call upon you to observe the augustness and sublimity of the fact that the Almighty is to remain unchanged and unchangeable when the very heavens grow old, and sun and stars are dim with age. We know not of what mighty revolutions this material universe has already been the scene; but there are indications of vast successive changes, requiring periods which almost baffle our calculations, and forcing us to travel back, till we are almost lost in remote time, in order to imagine their occurrence; and then we have to go forward, expecting fresh revolutions, and endeavouring, though vainly, to anticipate a season when the present system shall give place to a different; so that even the material universe seems constructed for a period which defies our arithmetic. We know, indeed, that there must have been a time when God was literally alone; but the more closely we investigate the farther does the time appear to recede; and we know also that there is to come a time when "the heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll," but on their bright and glorious face we can read as yet no signs of antiquity. And, nevertheless, immense as the duration is which is thus to be assigned to the material universe, it is a mere point and nothing in the

existence of God ; so that when the mighty period shall have waned to a close, God is only to be what He was and where He was before that "beginning" in which He "created the heavens and the earth." I know not how to convey to you my thoughts of the grandeur of God as depicted by this fact. Well might the prophet say of Him, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance : behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." We are in the habit of contrasting, as we before said, what we reckon transient with what we reckon comparatively permanent. We speak of the shortness of human life, and we appeal mournfully to the tree of the forest, which endures, perhaps, for centuries, whilst we are limited to three score years and ten. The tree lives but an inconsiderable time, if we compare its age with that of the mountain on whose side it grows ; the mountain itself may be but of recent formation if compared with the rocks on which it is based ; and these rocks may be but as of yesterday in comparison with the heavens, by whose revolutions we strive to reckon up their age. But let man decay, let the forests wither, let the mountains subside, let the rocks crumble, yea, let the very heavens cease from what we are wont to call their everlasting march, and God will have undergone no change throughout this immeasurable series of revolutions ; "I AM that I AM" when this series commenced, "I AM that I AM" when this series shall have closed.

But though eternity is thus to be affirmed of God in a sense in which it cannot be of anything besides, there are "things which are not seen" and which are "eternal" in the ordinary acceptation of the word. It is here that we must deal with the word "eternal" in the manner in which we dealt with the word "temporal"—consider it, that is, in reference not only to objects in themselves, but to our own connection with them. We may speak of the visible world as temporal and of the invisible as eternal, because we are to inhabit the one only for a time, and the other for ever. Whatever these worlds may be in themselves, or to other orders of being, we have everything to assure us that to our own race they wear but the two great characters of temporal and eternal, of probation and retribution, the one continued through a short space, the other indefinitely protracted. In the very same sense that "the things which are seen are temporal," in the sense that we possess them, procure them, and enjoy them for a time, in that sense are "the things which are not seen eternal," even in the sense that we possess them, procure them, and enjoy them for ever. If you have the riches which are seen, they are but temporal, for you must part with them at death ; if you have the riches which are not seen, they are eternal, for you shall never be deprived of their possession. If you suffer pains here, they are temporal ; they shall end, if not before, yet with the close of life. If you suffer pains, hereafter they will be eternal ; there is to come no moment of rest or of cessation. For ever is the light of God's countenance to shine on the redeemed, for ever is the Lamb to be with them, for ever is a river of pure delights to flow through their inheritance ; and oh ! for ever are the wicked to be banished from their Maker, for ever is the smoke of their torment to ascend, for ever is to continue the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. And do ye believe this ? Are ye thoroughly persuaded that the present and the future are distinguished by the characters of temporal and eternal ? Then what meaneth this devotion of your energies to what is earthly and perishable ? What meaneth this setting of the affections upon shadows and upon baubles ? What meaneth this languor and indifference in religion ? My brethren, the grand object of practical Christianity is to gain its rightful ascendancy for invisible things. It is here that the struggle lies. Faith and sense, these are the contending parties, and ye are under the dominion of the one or of the other—judge ye which ; but let no one call himself a believer in the reality and superiority of invisible and eternal things, when he is manifestly engaged with the love and desire of visible and present. This were a direct contradiction both to nature and experience. It is not thus in the affairs and transactions of life. And faith, we wish it well observed by you, faith is precisely the same principle in common things and in sacred. There is nothing mystical, nothing unintelligible, about the faith required of us in the Gospel. "To believe," when applied to God's Word, means nothing more and nothing less than "to believe" when applied to man's word. It is in no respect whatsoever a different mental act, neither will it be followed by different results. Suppose I were to tell any one of you, that if he would resist certain propensities, submit to certain hardships, and perform certain duties, which were all within his power, he should be advanced a twelvemonth hence to the highest worldly dignity, and have every desire of his heart gratified, every hope accomplished.

The consequence of his believing what I said would undoubtedly be his entering forthwith on the course which I prescribed. If you suppose that the things to be given up admitted not for a moment of being compared with the things to be acquired, it is certain that faith in what I promised would produce immediately the doing what I directed. If the man refused to make the present sacrifice, the inference on all sides would be that he did not really believe in the future recompence. And what will be produced by faith in human, will be produced also by faith in Divine testimony. We again say that there is no difference in the principle of faith, but only in its objects. In place of a twelvemonth hence, let it be after death that the great blessing is to be acquired, and the case is still the same, provided only there be no comparison between the good to be surrendered and the good to be obtained; so long as the advantage in prospect is incalculably superior to that in possession, there is needed nothing but faith, and we shall immediately, by an irrepressible dictate of nature, determine to forego the one for the sake of the other. We are so constituted as to be ready to act what we believe for our interest; and all that is necessary to our acting rightly, is the really believing it for our interest to prefer eternity to time.

We would, therefore, in conclusion, impress upon you, men and brethren, the importance of diligently examining whether or no you actually believe the Bible. We quite feel that you may regard this as a very strange injunction, seeing that you bear the name of Christian, and unreservedly acknowledge the inspiration of Scripture. But again and again would we tell you, that what would not pass for faith when the testimony is human ought not to pass for faith when the testimony is Divine. The truths of the Bible are of such a nature that there can be no evidence of our believing them except our obeying them. Do ye believe in the happiness of heaven? Not unless ye are trying to secure it. Do ye believe in the wretchedness of hell? Not unless ye are striving to escape it. You might be able to give me a very satisfactory account of the evidences of Christianity; you might be able to arrange an admirable demonstration from prophecy, and morals, and history and internal testimony, of the truth of Christ's mission; but we beseech you not to confound two things which are often confounded, the believing and the knowing the reasons for believing. It seems strange, but nevertheless it is quite possible, that a man may be able to prove a thing, and yet, after all, not believe it.

And be not ye, therefore, satisfied that ye are not unbelievers, unbelievers though ye have been baptised in Christ's name, brought up in Christ's church, and are accustomed to profess yourselves His disciples, unless ye are living as those whose treasure is above, and whose conversation is in heaven. It was thus with St. Paul. He counted all things but loss; he despised alike the applauses and the insults of the world. He was neither attracted by earthly pleasures nor daunted by earthly pains. And why? Because he "looked not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen." He walked by faith; he made a full surrender of all earthly objects; he believed what God told him as to the future. And it will be the same with ourselves. Only let us believe that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," and every energy will be given to the securing through Christ an entrance into the "inheritance which fadeth not away;" "we shall so pass," in the language of our church, "through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal."

And how naturally and closely this subject applies itself to a charitable cause! We have been speaking of the difference between real and nominal faith. How are you to know the one from the other? The criterion of the Bible is simple and decisive—"By their fruits ye shall know them." It is no use talking of Christianity: are we acting Christianity? It is no use professing to believe that "the things which are seen are temporal," if we are not manifestly doing all in our power to live for another world, and to teach others to live for another world. I may apply this to you—nay, brethren, apply it to yourselves. Do not wait till you return home to apply it; apply it now. Here are children gathered out of the courts and alleys of an overcrowded city, born to no inheritance but that of ignorance and vice, and almost sure, if no kind friends interpose, to grow up without that knowledge which is needful to their escaping everlasting death. Now will you assist in instructing these poor children? Oh! tell me not of your own preference of the eternal to the temporal, if you can turn with indifference from these poor children's appeal. Impossible that you can really believe the words of the Bible—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God," and yet that you will not stretch out a hand to help hundreds of the

young, who, left to themselves, are in imminent, palpable peril of sinking into that fire which is among the things which are not seen, but which is, alas ! eternal.

I declare to you, that it is with a melancholy feeling that I now occupy this place. I have often occupied it in former years, when the liberality of the collection has made it a pleasure to stand forward to advocate here the public charities of the land. But I have heard that the case is now altered, and that the contributions here gathered have gradually and greatly diminished. I am not ignorant that many of the wealthier inhabitants of the district have removed, and therefore I am loth to ascribe the diminution of subscriptions to the diminution of Christian zeal. But, now, just think what must come over such a parish as this unless a great effort be made to arrest the decline of its charities. The poor do not migrate with the rich. The rich may exchange the crowded street and the dark warehouse for the green field and the pleasant valley ; but the poor must remain in their courts and their alleys. The wealthy shopkeeper may come to his place of business merely to make money, and then he may hurry off to spend it in his pleasant country retreat ; but the poor are tied down to their gloomy, and perhaps unhealthy locality, and there they must toil, ay, and if their employers desert them, and the superior classes are indifferent about them, there they must grow up without that which can relieve their necessities. What we fear in a great parish like this is the changed habits of mercantile life. The richer parishioners may all domesticate themselves at a distance from their place of business, and leave the poor to press on the charities of the parish till those charities sink beneath the ever-growing burden. It is easy to say, that these absent parishioners should contribute to the charities as though they were present. I have no doubt whatever, that many of them do ; but it is probable that, taking an interest in the poor of the villages where they actually live, they will have less heart and less money to bestow upon the poor of the parish where they only get the means of living.

I ask you, therefore, under these really trying and very difficult circumstances, to make a great effort for the poor of this parish. I trust I shall not hear, as I too frequently do on these occasions, of numbers who are well able to give, yet pass the plate and give nothing ; for I think the subject of discourse will have disposed you all to cordial liberality. Is wealth only temporal ? Is it only for a brief season at the most that we can call riches our own ? and is a day, a solemn and a great day, at hand, when God will reckon with us, and allot our eternal recompence according to the use made of the talents wherewith we were entrusted ? Then be it ours so to " make for ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations." Think of the awfulness, the terrible magnificence of the scene, when, amid the crash of all " things temporal," the passing away of all visible systems, the " sign of the Son of Man shall be seen in the heavens," the anointed Judge of human kind shall appear on His throne of fire and of cloud, and then think whether, in that fearful catastrophe, you will not wish that you had secured the favour of the Judge. Oh ! yes ; but what saith the Scripture ? " Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy ; the Lord shall deliver him in the day of trouble." Deliver him ! Yes, prove your faith by your works : then ye can in full confidence use that thrilling prayer of the Litany, " In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver us."

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					— 16	H. Stowell	22	72	557
					— 16	J. Pike	5	209	131
					— 16	W. Howells	20	391	528
					— 16	Dr. P. Smith	20	17	506
					— 16	B. W. Noel	21	33	501
					— 16	M. Melville	21	161	339
					— 16	Mr. Wells	3	74	65
					— 16	J. Truancy	21	295	571

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PROVERBS.				
Hi. 5	Dr. Moore	1	81	107
— 7	Dr. Humphreys	15	310	600
— 27	G. Benson	6	320	100
iv. 7	G. Clayton	2	311	82
—	Dr. Fletcher	4	87	82
—	Dr. Stewart	4	87	82
iv. 13	Dr. Winter	9	206	100
—	Bp. C. Sumner	9	270	225
iv. 18	Bp. Bloomfield	14	161	824
—	W. Jay	3	212	44
—	W. F. Vance	13	7	312
—	W. F. Vance	19	1	430
iv. 23	S. J. May	24	494	603
vii. 7	R. Denon	7	241	207
viii. 15, 19	G. Clayton	2	245	40
x. 2	T. Dade	13	97	207
xi. 19	T. Wood	20	245	518
— 30	V. Barber	3	436	98
xiii. 22	P. Oster	13	100	275
xiv. 34	R. Marks	3	70	65
xviii. 10	C. R. Prochett	10	200	221
— 21	H. Melville	13	81	321
xviii. 2	J. Cunningham	6	100	100
— 2	J. Burns	14	14	342
— 6	H. Edwards	1	18	2
— 6	H. Bull	10	81	209
xviii. 20	W. Marsh	1	201	21
— 20—32	B. Miller	12	227	231
xxiv. 11, 12	H. Townley	2	433	27
— 21	J. Scott	18	170	600
xxv. 25	J. Adey	8	224	182
xxvii. 1	G. Hyatt	10	40	201
xxix. 13	B. Wilson	4	428	142

ECCLESIASTES

— 2	Mr. Maude	7	200	107
— 4	S. B. Felt	3	440	40
Hi. 1	Dr. Sykes	7	237	100
vii. 13	W. Jay	13	140	207
— 20	Dr. Butler	30	110	311
—	H. Melville	24	221	603
ix. 10	J. Smyke	19	1	401
xi. 1	F. Chase	23	40	200
— 1—6	R. Watson	10	102	270
— 4	J. Wilson	13	58	217
— 6	H. McNeile	23	232	600
xii. 7	T. Leary	22	200	270
— 11	W. Burrows	6	426	200

CANTICLES.

vi. 9	H. B. M. L.	13	225	26
viii. 5	R. W. Simpson	8	257	21

ISAIAH.

— 18	J. Parsons	10	0	200
ii. 4	J. Gray	7	6	174
iii. 1—3	J. Clayton	0	20	231
— 7	B. W. Scott	10	273	275
vi. 1	Dr. Winter	13	65	205
— 1—	J. Parsons	4	161	100
— 4	J. F. Denham	17	8	435
— 8	A. Potter	17	277	442
viii. 12—14	J. Parsons	23	100	200
— 12, 13	J. Scott	10	277	420
ix. 2	J. H. Johnson	10	423	203
— 6	Dr. Bethune	4	200	200
— 6	D. Wilson	23	110	200
— 7	E. Parsons	7	40	222
xi. 1, 2	J. Hambleton	23	112	200
— 16	Amos	8	270	77
xiv. 9	J. Hyatt	1	200	21
xviii. 3	H. McNeile	7	200	187
xxvi. 1	W. Gurney	5	200	123
— 4	G. Clayton	11	420	212
— 6	W. B. James	30	200	203
— 9	J. Parsons	10	200	225
— 12	T. Mortimer	23	312	200
— 13	J. N. Teller	11	310	203
— 13	W. Jay	3	40	64
xxviii. 14—18	H. McNeile	10	60	601
— 16	Dr. Warren	5	65	122
— 20	J. Griffin	7	194	140
xxx. 14	T. H. Scott	10	253	232
xxxi. 2	R. Kemp	5	241	123
— 8	A. Brambleton	7	65	178

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xxxi. 15	J. Parsons	9	200	225
— 17	G. Clayton	17	100	443
— 2—5	J. Overton	7	43	179
— 2—5	G. Clayton	19	97	407
— 4, 5	W. Williams	3	321	81
— 6	R. Watson	7	227	105
— 6—8	T. Price	21	137	613
— 9	Dr. Kaff	13	221	372
— 9	J. Bromley	10	204	270
— 9	T. Morgan	3	125	200
— 9	S. Thedy	12	117	340
— 9	H. Melville	16	17	116
— 9	J. Pentecost	5	161	124
— 9	D. Warren	9	161	210
— 9	Mr. Harcke	5	109	130
— 9	H. Melville	19	83	450
— 9	H. McNeile	24	103	611
— 9	R. Shepherd	7	107	118
— 9	T. Jones	15	221	413
— 9	J. R. Cooper	13	211	357
— 9	Mr. Beaman	1	241	16
— 9	J. Parsons	18	181	470
— 9	J. H. Hinton	7	404	100
— 9	H. McNeile	11	227	357
— 9	J. Stratton	0	433	227
— 9	T. Mortimer	3	117	64
— 9	J. Blatterie	10	129	420
— 9	R. Parsons	5	202	210
— 9	Dr. MAU	0	270	163
— 9	R. Keck	11	102	204
— 9	H. W. Neile	4	241	105
— 9	J. Parsons	10	321	276
— 9	Mr. Elliot	2	373	531
— 9	Dr. Rader	4	3	90
— 9	W. Jay	22	200	200
— 9	Dr. Winter	5	253	140
— 9	E. Jones	15	310	416
— 9	W. F. Vance	14	210	172
— 9	J. Parsons	4	145	90
— 9	J. Parsons	8	432	220
— 9	W. A. Easonson	1	273	107
— 9	J. Parsons	24	204	291
— 9	Dr. Warren	2	120	32
— 9	J. Burns	11	204	310
— 9	Dr. Rader	23	63	304

JEREMIAH.

— 7	Dr. Winter	7	322	107
— 7	Mr. Woodbridge	5	310	120
— 7	Dr. Winter	10	103	221
— 7	Dr. Winter	14	30	401
— 7	W. Jay	10	125	422
— 7	J. E. Johnson	3	201	80
— 7	E. Irving	4	345	114
— 7	Dr. Chalmers	8	200	215
— 7	T. Blinney	15	213	103
— 7	T. Atkins	1	101	7
— 7	E. Parsons	14	142	107
— 7	J. Clayton	13	21	315
— 7	R. Hall	14	113	371
— 7	H. McNeile	23	225	502
— 7	—	23	211	503
— 7	—	23	200	200
— 7	—	23	321	504
— 7	L. Saunders	7	274	151
— 7	J. P. Decham	13	210	337
— 7	H. McNeile	9	424	254
— 7	G. D. Wolfe	3	300	45
— 7	T. Jones	11	71	190
— 7	Bp. C. Sumner	10	146	207
— 7	J. Stratton	21	94	511
— 7	Bp. Bloomfield	21	65	562
— 7	T. Kennel	1	227	72
— 7	W. Jay	19	112	400
— 7	A. Orchard	9	200	200
— 7	Fr. Gordon	90	200	471
— 7	H. McNeile	40	22	216

LAMENTATIONS.

— 2	G. D. Mott	2	309	50
— 2	J. Hambleton	14	341	400
— 2	Dr. Mott	1	37	1

PSALMS.

— 2	R. Watson	20	7	416
— 2	H. Melville	23	200	402

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ix. 7-6	H. M'Neile	17	157	446
— 14	J. Bowers	20	156	519
xiv. 6, 7	E. Irving	6	256	196
— 12, 13	Bp. Bloomfield	13	65	345
— 20	I. Cobbin	11	46	268
xvii. 22, 23	T. Atkins	10	204	274
xviii. 4	Dr. M'All	24	173	615
— 20	J. A. James	14	320	385
xxiii. 31	Bp. C. Sumner	14	241	381
— 35	W. H. Charlton	1	200	19
xxxiv. 16	M. M. E.	6	363	100
xxxvi. 24-28	G. Simson	10	325	428
xxxvii. 21, 22	H. M'Neile	9	341	251

DANIEL.

ii. 20, 21	Dr. Fletcher	15	23	303
— 44	W. Thorpe	16	296	425
iii. 16-18	W. Jay	8	375	251
vi. 5	T. Dale	30	266	523
— 21-23	Rev. E. Carwen	2	451	60
vii. 9, 10	Mrs. Worthington	3	162	67
— 13, 14	Rev. J. Cawood	12	337	335
ix. 20-23	J. Clayton	12	98	319
— 26	W. Darham	12	97	330
x. 19	J. M. Cooper	20	218	517

JONAH.

iii. 12	J. Wilcox	20	113	511
iv. 9-11	W. H. Cooper	5	100	126

NICAH.

J. 7	A. C. Wilks	20	145	513
iv. 8	H. M'Neile	6	365	194
v. 2-4	E. Watson	5	321	130
— 1	W. Jay	10	243	279
vi. 8	J. Cloustonson	13	167	332
vii. 18	Dr. Waugh	9	360	252

NABUM.

i. 7	J. E. Good	12	461	230
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HABAKKUK.

ii. 3	M. O'Mellivan	10	305	277
iii. 2	T. Mortimer	15	321	400
— 10	J. Parsons	28	193	500
— 18	A. S.	11	208	260

ISRAHANIAH.

xl. 17	A. Reed	66	97	510
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HAGGAI.

L. 4	J. Parsons	8	179	212
- 5	H. M'Neile	10	17	400

HOSEA.

iv. 17	W. B. Williams	8	91	123
vi. 4	J. Parsons	11	405	311
— 6	Mr. Hale	1	305	94
ix. 6	E. Bowers	8	24	60
— 7	T. Hanny	20	200	400
xi. 1	G. C. Toomson	24	304	600
— 4	W. Jay	20	40	200
xiv. 5	J. H. D.	8	120	200
—	J. E. Good	5	227	120

JOEL.

ii	T. Mortimer	15	305	411
—	J. Parsons	23	201	500
—	W. Yates	21	102	500

ZECHARIAH.

i. 8	J. Clayton	14	8	300
ii. 13	R. Watson	17	81	430
iv. 6	C. Jerram	4	372	113
—	W. Wilson	11	65	200
v. 8	G. Williams	9	210	243
vi. 12, 13	J. Scholefield	23	417	604
vii. 11, 12	G. Clayton	23	80	503
x. 10	W. Lucy	12	177	373
xi. 3	W. Jay	21	273	510
xii. 9	G. Williams	4	325	110

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xii. 10	E. Irving	19	130	400
xiii. 7	J. Stratton	21	55	600
— 9	W. Thomas	4	241	104
xiv. 9	G. Simson	12	428	342

MALACHI.

ii. 1-3	G. Preston	16	65	410
— 16-18	N. Armstrong	17	161	444
— 17	J. Davies	1	441	20
iv. 2	S. Growther	13	44	314

MATTHEW.

i. 21	E. Oakes	10	21	259
— 23	J. Taylor	11	280	304
ii. 12	Bondaloue	7	185	166
— 12	F. Kershaw	3	31	62
— 12	J. Parsons	4	120	98
— 17	W. H. B.	8	74	200
v. 7	H. Budd	11	385	310
— 25, 26	Dr. Rudge	4	53	93
— 43-45	J. A. James	15	329	411
vi. 9-14	E. Irving	2	23	34
— 11	T. J. Judkin	11	225	300
— 12	W. Wilkinson	4	277	107
—	J. Clayton	2	233	72
—	T. Mortimer	12	433	241
—	T. Dale	21	40	523
—	S. Carwen	2	21	23
—	H. Fell	5	337	126
—	J. Cunningham	5	432	142
—	H. M'Neile	21	113	530
—	Dr. A. Clarke	15	217	404
—	J. K. K.	6	348	167
—	Dr. Chalucers	14	247	381
—	R. Black	1	307	24
—	Mr. Garrard	6	97	155
—	G. Noel	10	241	273
—	Dr. M'Crrie	19	353	500
—	C. W. Le Bas	15	12	391
—	J. T. Law	8	330	225
—	T. Wood	11	151	200
—	J. Cunningham	23	161	561
—	W. Culling	23	102	584
—	J. R. Pinnau	1	365	25
—	W. Urwick	13	102	374
—	Dr. Pearson	13	300	274
—	Archd. Bather	21	307	545
—	E. Irving	2	440	57
—	R. Albott	10	235	371
—	Bp. Sumner	4	337	111
—	H. Lacey	1	401	20
—	F. Denham	13	360	365
—	J. Clayton	12	71	318
—	Dr. Vivian	3	433	80
—	T. P.	21	240	54
—	H. Stowell	21	1	600
—	H. McVail	17	242	446
—	H. M. Neale	3	113	68
—	Dr. Doddridge	15	358	415
—	R. Hall	15	113	300
—	J. Judkin	9	273	941
—	E. Jenkins	2	351	51
—	R. Watson	16	70	411
—	H. Blunt	18	49	601
—	C. Simson	10	257	425
—	J. Dixon	11	121	302
—	Dr. Harries	17	223	406
—	Dr. Chalucers	23	29	500
—	C. Wesley	1	305	20
—	H. McVail	14	150	371
—	A. Tolman	10	118	300
—	C. Jerram	5	300	141
—	T. Smith	2	410	50
—	Dr. Mortimer	6	380	174
—	F. W. Layland	5	1	111
—	E. Stowell	13	302	359
—	F. G. Cozman	13	119	373
—	R. Newton	10	401	244
—	Dr. Chalucers	19	303	400
—	J. N. P. P.	23	81	531
—	I. Hart	10	176	200
—	T. B. P. P.	10	37	294
—	J. Parsons	4	120	91
—	T. J. Judkin	13	241	300
—	J. Thorne	10	23	411
—	J. Parsons	4	113	91
—	Dr. Styles	14	65	371
—	T. Mortimer	1	64	11
—	W. Bowers	1	57	61

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— 43	10	312	302	10	— 25	10	312	302	10
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— 40	11	312	302	10	— 26, 27	10	312	302	10
xviii. 8	10	440	385	10	— 28	10	5	34	11
— 9	10	440	385	10	28-30	10	18	177	406
xix. 1-15	10	4	173	10	— 31	10	72	110	359
— 14	10	1	400	30	31-32	10	11	373	300
—	10	21	300	400	— 33	10	18	14	459
—	10	20	300	304	33-34	10	0	121	300
—	10	4	120	616	— 35	10	0	39	385
—	10	5	405	145	— 36-37	10	13	315	307
—	10	7	411	100	xvii. 9	9	2	341	45
—	10	23	171	303	R. Hill	23	307	545	
—	10	1	153	30	xv. 21-23	23	1	553	
—	10	4	300	100	J. Parsons	0	1	148	
—	10	10	173	400	H. M. Nettle	17	313	417	
—	10	0	300	304	Sp. Sumner	12	170	373	
—	10	10	300	400	E. Hall	1	334	73	
—	10	1	3	1	C. Bradley	14	35	309	
—	10	16	300	400	M. G. Jones	4	400	115	
—	10	7	417	300	Mr. Milne	5	145	137	
—	10	10	145	400	J. Davis	4	204	101	
—	10	24	300	303	R. C. Dillon	9	40	212	
—	10	6	170	212	T. D. Gregg	30	305	500	
—	10	13	300	303	R. C. Dillon	13	200	553	
—	10	7	300	100	W. Harwood	1	23	4	
—	10	8	300	214	J. Parsons	3	325	40	
—	10	0	940	101	R. Cary	20	312	377	
—	10	0	353	330	Sp. Wilson	16	331	413	
					O. Redford	10	112	400	
					Dr. Harris	6	00	123	
					Mr. Vaughan	5	101	100	
					T. Y.	15	143	300	
					Dr. Chalmers	17	00	437	
					R. Trevelyan	11	217	200	
					J. M. Jones	0	101	135	
					J. M. Harwood	23	379	505	
					W. B. Williams	0	417	270	
					W. B. Harwood	9	145	200	
					Dr. DeLong	10	314	500	
					R. M. Wells	0	301	340	
					R. Irving	0	27	117	
					J. B. Marston	10	148	312	
					T. Page	10	203	317	
					H. M. Nettle	10	217	311	
					R. C. Dillon	10	110	217	
					T. W. Harvey	1	405	40	
					J. Parsons	21	125	540	
					D. Wilson	21	211	511	
					Sp. DeLong	0	305	170	

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— 42	J. Parsons	21	145	530	22, 23, 24	H. M'Neile	8	161	212
— 45—47	H. M'Neile	24	85	530	25	J. A. James	24	26	604
vi. 27	B. C. Noel	15	260	480	17	Dr. Brown	20	17	510
— 29	W. Howels	21	23	480	xv. 9	Dr. Bunder	1	13	9
— 37	Anonymous	11	110	292	— 11	J. Parsons	9	303	254
— 43, 44	Dr. Andrews	12	243	235	xvi. 5	H. M'Neile	23	113	600
— 62	H. Baitel	17	97	440	xvii. 7	W. Jay	15	40	393
vii. 12	J. E. Good	13	60	345	— 11	G. Collier	5	173	138
— 46	T. G. Ackland	1	45	4	— 20	W. H. B.	8	200	220
viii. 12	W. B. Williams	11	217	212	— 20	Bp. C. Sumner	10	337	279
— 51	T. Wallace	8	123	210	xx. 7	W. Dodsworth	23	502	600
ix. 35	H. Towale	1	123	8	— 20, 21	Bp. Wilson	19	281	498
x. 10	J. Bunting	21	73	532	— 22	T. Mortimer	23	154	587
— 29	T. Jones	5	255	124	— 27	Dr. Thorpe	20	1	504
xi. 11	W. Wodrow	14	80	371	— 28	Bp. Blomfield	16	56	418
— 23	W. Howels	1	116	8	— 28	A. Reed	23	273	595
— 25, 26	Mr. Jullart	2	157	40	— 30	R. Hall	8	337	222
— 35	Dr. Styles	6	305	105	xii. 28	W. M. Henketh	24	116	611
— 43	Mr. Jackson	11	257	202	xiii. 5	S. Smith	2	395	55
xii. 31, 32	J. Parsons	4	182	101	xiv. 24, 25	Dr. Fletcher	15	129	117
xiii. 7	W. Lewis	22	14	553	— 25	R. Hall	4	437	307
xiv. 6	W. H. B.	6	194	200	xv. 16	J. Flavell	8	236	216
— 8	W. Cunningham	1	85	4	— 17, 18	S. R. Capel	15	361	413
— 15	G. C. Gorman	5	113	123	— 28, 23	J. Leitchfield	20	369	487
— 16	Dr. Baitel	17	40	437	— 28	J. Parsons	18	365	83
— 16, 17	Dr. Baitel	6	353	100	— 28	J. H. Fell	3	258	77
— 23	G. M'Neile	0	101	123	— 28, 29	J. Anderson	18	307	477
— 26, 27	W. Jay	6	241	167	— 28	E. Parsons	6	307	174
— 35	Dr. Harrison	9	132	235	xviii. 23, 24	J. Dixon	24	285	021
— 43	J. H. Evans	16	108	480					
xv. 1, 2	G. Clayton	20	371	480					
— 0	R. Hill	11	240	367	I. 14	J. Bunting	2	406	56
— 13	W. Williams	3	240	74	— 14	Dr. Chalmers	14	349	357
— 20	J. Leitchfield	1	101	11	— 14	H. M'Neile	8	97	208
— 20, 27	J. L. Jay	3	240	76	— 14	Dr. Waugh	14	271	382
xvi. 7	Dr. Baitel	7	112	161	— 14	R. Newton	21	317	548
— 7—12	Dr. Baitel	2	267	30	— 14	W. Yates	10	249	276
— 8, 9	Dr. Baitel	17	141	062	— 14	Dr. Maddy	3	8	61
xvii. 3	H. Baitel	4	433	117	— 10, 11	J. A. James	19	185	492
— 17	H. Baitel	26	55	005	— 21	M. M. E.	10	487	241
— 20, 21	T. Taylor	12	267	250	— 21	Dr. Bennett	18	217	355
xix. 25—27	G. Edwards	7	157	154	— 21, 21	E. Bickersteth	3	353	83
— 30	H. M'Neile	1	32	7	— 21	H. M'Neile	17	17	436
— 30, 31	G. M. West	12	123	354	— 21	J. Barnett	6	225	210
xx. 1	T. Mortimer	15	403	321	— 21	Mr. Slye	10	338	278
— 20, 21	J. Baitel	8	351	345	— 21	J. Dixon	10	183	309
— 20, 21	H. Baitel	14	233	280	— 21	T. Griffith	23	309	091
— 20, 21	T. Mortimer	23	44	055	— 21	R. Watson	16	30	416
— 20, 21	J. Pratt	23	238	507	— 21	J. Pratt	23	238	507
— 20, 21	Bp. C. Sumner	10	65	062	— 21	J. Parsons	19	33	483
— 20, 21	J. Parsons	19	33	483	— 21	D. M'Neile	5	231	132
— 20, 21	J. Leitchfield	17	284	451	— 21	J. Leitchfield	17	284	451
— 20, 21	T. Mortimer	17	93	430	— 21	T. Mortimer	17	93	430
— 20, 21	J. Saunders	18	33	361	— 21	J. Saunders	18	33	361
— 20, 21	J. N. Pearson	22	193	565	— 21	J. N. Pearson	22	193	565
— 20, 21	Mr. Palmer	1	237	17	— 21	Mr. Palmer	1	237	17
— 20, 21	R. Hill	11	365	305	— 21	R. Hill	11	365	305
— 20, 21	Dr. Brunton	24	345	021	— 21	Dr. Brunton	24	345	021
— 20, 21	W. Eccles	1	408	26	— 21	W. Eccles	1	408	26
— 20, 21	R. Watson	17	351	455	— 21	R. Watson	17	351	455
— 20, 21	J. H. Stewart	3	197	73	— 21	J. H. Stewart	3	197	73
— 20, 21	Dr. Wardlaw	10	359	240	— 21	Dr. Wardlaw	10	359	240
— 20, 21	J. Parsons	7	423	200	— 21	J. Parsons	7	423	200
— 20, 21	Bp. Blomfield	11	113	201	— 21	Bp. Blomfield	11	113	201
— 20, 21	F. Goode	20	8	504	— 21	F. Goode	20	8	504
— 20, 21	W. Thorpe	23	122	560	— 21	W. Thorpe	23	122	560
— 20, 21	T. Ely	8	380	225	— 21	T. Ely	8	380	225
— 20, 21	Dr. Chalmers	20	350	820	— 21	Dr. Chalmers	20	350	820
— 20, 21	F. West	6	209	159	— 21	F. West	6	209	159
— 20, 21	Bp. Blomfield	18	8	450	— 21	Bp. Blomfield	18	8	450
— 20, 21	J. C. Williams	4	325	110	— 21	J. C. Williams	4	325	110
— 20, 21	W. Capers	10	360	281	— 21	W. Capers	10	360	281
— 20, 21	W. Mann	5	313	137	— 21	W. Mann	5	313	137
— 20, 21	H. M'Neile	14	166	376	— 21	H. M'Neile	14	166	376
— 20, 21	J. H. Cooper	22	161	563	— 21	J. H. Cooper	22	161	563
— 20, 21	Bp. C. Sumner	10	377	309	— 21	Bp. C. Sumner	10	377	309
— 20, 21	B. W. Noel	12	424	843	— 21	B. W. Noel	12	424	843
— 20, 21	J. Sandys	18	66	475	— 21	J. Sandys	18	66	475
— 20, 21	J. Parsons	6	113	153	— 21	J. Parsons	6	113	153
— 20, 21	C. W. Vibert	9	39	232	— 21	C. W. Vibert	9	39	232
— 20, 21	T. Dale	15	17	392	— 21	T. Dale	15	17	392
— 20, 21	E. Carey	11	312	305	— 21	E. Carey	11	312	305
— 20, 21	D. Ruell	7	321	197	— 21	D. Ruell	7	321	197
— 20, 21	R. Hambleton	20	228	518	— 21	R. Hambleton	20	228	518
— 20, 21	C. S. Hawtrey	9	33	232	— 21	C. S. Hawtrey	9	33	232
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— 20, 21	R. C. Dillon	3	289	79	— 21	R. C. Dillon	3	289	79
— 20, 21	W. Dodsworth	24	369	076	— 21	W. Dodsworth	24	369	076
— 20, 21	T. Page	23	124	585	— 21	T. Page	23	124	585
— 20, 21	J. Blackburn	4	187	10	— 21	J. Blackburn	4	187	10
— 20, 21	Dr. Caw	4	187	10	— 21	Dr. Caw	4	187	10

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D. Warren

J. Parsons

E. Irving

T. Bradshaw

W. Jay

T. Griffith

J. M'Donald

J. E. Beaumont

E. Irving

Dr. Valpy

J. Hambleton

S. Kilpin

T. Page

J. B. Marsden

J. Barât

O. Birt

W. B. Williams

Bp. C. Sumner

Mr. Pindar

A. Fletcher

S. Smith

Dr. Wardlaw

J. Parsons

M. M. E.

J. Fletcher

J. Marshall

T. Jones

W. H. Leach

Bp. Wilson

U. Hall

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- 21	J. Barnett	12	143	200	— 17	J. Wesley	0	36	222
- 22, 24	Mr. Bloomfield	21	210	260	— 20	P. Jones	10	165	400
- 23-25	T. Mortimer	5	205	221	vl. 2	H. Dodd	0	200	243
2, 2	W. H. Taylor	13	200	200	— 15	T. Jones	10	57	484
—	Dr. Wood	12	272	279	— 10-10	J. Parsons	10	150	400
- 6, 7	R. Watson	15	243	223	viii. 9	Ep. Wilson	11	145	203
- 7	F. West	6	117	407	—	T. Mortimer	7	177	183
- 9	W. Jewett	10	417	153	—	T. Dale	13	65	318
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- 11	N. Armstrong	9	215	245	— 15	J. Graham	17	63	430
- 13	J. Parsons	10	205	221	— 4	R. C. Dillon	24	276	620
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- 2	J. Parsons	10	205	221	xi. 2	J. Armstrong	3	221	41
v. 7	Dr. Gordon	15	103	463	— 14	H. Newton	14	172	377
- 14, 15	Dr. Wardlaw	12	274	282	— 19	T. Best	9	269	234
vi. 20	J. H. Bright	24	125	612	xii. 10	H. Melville	10	225	502
ix. 10	J. Parsons	11	205	221	— 5	Ep. Wilson	19	203	460
—	R. C. Dillon	6	401	145	—	E. Bickerteth	15	377	414
- 21	H. Melville	15	160	201	—	H. Melville	10	343	433
- 20, 27	W. Williams	5	126	127	GALATIANS.				
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- 31	T. Mortimer	22	200	205	T. Smith	22	184	501	
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- 10	J. Sherman	20	247	605	W. Wilkinson	5	36	63	
- 23-25	H. Melville	19	245	502	E. Watson	6	101	171	
- 23-25	J. Pratt	23	225	201	R. C. Dillon	20	221	595	
- 29	Dr. Gordon	19	21	422	H. M. Noble	20	221	594	
- 29	J. Overton	7	211	191	E. Irving	21	27	534	
xii. 31	R. Heald	12	290	220	B. W. Noel	21	257	545	
—	Dr. Baskett	6	217	120	R. Philip	11	290	200	
xiii. 1	J. Galloway	16	220	477	Dr. Wardlaw	21	267	553	
- 1, 2	R. Watson	16	101	400	J. Scott	23	211	507	
- 9, 10	Ep. Bloomfield	13	97	400	T. Lewis	9	172	72	
- 13	J. Parsons	11	245	200	Dr. Thomson	10	240	274	
- 13	T. P. Lee	16	250	420	R. Newton	17	241	453	
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—	C. L. Jones	0	15	204	Amos Harcourt	11	17	287	
—	G. Rose	0	10	234	J. Brown	12	8	314	
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- 54	J. Parsons	12	205	221	H. W. Hamilton	13	23	243	
- 57	J. Pratt	14	221	274	Ep. Wilson	17	207	400	
- 57-59	W. Jay	23	200	400	Dr. Clarke	5	117	125	
- 59	E. Bickerteth	15	377	414	H. Melville	21	115	207	
—	Dr. Philip	6	237	100	T. Wadsworth	19	79	405	
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- 24	J. A. Jones	3	204	79	W. H. Taylor	11	31	308	
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- 16	R. Watson	12	100	200	J. H. Evans	21	277	607	
- 18	W. R. March	12	225	200	Dr. Collier	8	70	200	
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- 2	Dr. Wilkins	10	61	404	W. Brown	9	114	237	
- 10	Dr. Giddens	19	243	605	R. C. Dillon	2	114	204	
- 10	H. Melville	23	145	502	T. Woodroffe	21	17	534	
- 15	W. Howells	23	205	502	T. Mortimer	14	72	270	
- 17	J. B. Hart	0	151	220	T. Bunney	24	146	612	
- 18	T. M. Giffey	11	62	200	T. Lewy	20	152	512	
v. 1	R. Hill	6	17	117	Dr. Fletcher	21	7	220	
- 4, 5	Dr. Wagh	5	278	210	Ep. J. Giffey	4	209	113	
- 6	W. Jay	23	200	400	J. H. Evans	20	21	500	
- 7	W. Taylor	4	247	100	Dr. M. Carson	4	205	109	
- 10	Ep. J. Giffey	8	120	210	J. Wilson	22	100	543	
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- 11	Mr. Carter	6	21	117	W. Henry	16	120	200	
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- 11	T. Williams	14	111	275	Dr. Smith	24	276	600	
- 14	J. Anderson	4	450	223	J. Parsons	6	97	00	
- 14 15	Dr. Thomson	16	142	423	COLOSSIANS.				
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— 11	J. E. Beaumont	13	116	240	— 5	R. Hall	12	257	300
— 14	J. Bunting	3	143	70	— 5	Dr. Collyer	9	278	347
— 22	W. Horwood	22	213	72	— 13	J. Sherman	23	177	504
— 17	Bp. Wilson	9	1	200	— 21	Bp. Blomfield	18	17	400
— 14	Dr. Fletcher	14	270	300	— 21	R. Hall	8	221	222
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— 17	Bp. Wilson	9	409	265	— 23	Dr. Bennet	11	206	304
— 17	W. Giles	15	240	405	— 23	B. W. Noel	20	81	520
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— 8	Mr. Berry	3	104	124	— 23	T. Smith	4	71	94
— 12-15	W. Naylor	20	200	677	— 23	G. Clayton	22	241	506
— 18	J. Scott	4	400	110	— 23	J. Upton	22	333	573
V. 21	Dr. Dendry	21	200	500	— 23				
— 8	I. TIMOTHY.				— 23				
— 11	W. Howells	13	200	230	— 23				
— 14	J. Lister	7	20	175	— 23				
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III. 15	Dr. Pearson	17	404	450	— 23				
— 16	J. E. Foster	21	184	500	— 23				
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— 8	Bp. J. Sumner	5	200	142	— 23				
— 12-14	Dr. Waugh	5	200	150	— 23				
— 13	P. M'owan	5	200	130	— 23				
— 16	R. W. Sibthorpe	10	200	375	— 23				
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— 10	Bp. Blomfield	13	237	300	— 23				
— 23	Dr. Hawes	10	237	404	— 23				
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— 8	Dr. Fletcher	8	217	213	— 23				
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— 1	K. Good	14	40	300	— 23				
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— 2	W. Giles	15	240	405	— 23				
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— 15	Dr. Chalmers	20	130	301	— 23				
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— 6	J. Clayton	10	171	400	— 23				
— 6-8	J. Sheppard	23	230	304	— 23				
— 7, 8	O. Clarke	5	13	100	— 23				
— 14, 15	Dr. Waugh	5	200	150	— 23				
— 1	E. Probert	23	17	304	— 23				
— 9	J. Clayton	8	100	100	— 23				
— 14	III. REVELATION.				— 23				
— 14	J. Parsons	6	7	100	— 23				
— 14	H. Melville	22	200	501	— 23				
— 14	D. Ruel	5	200	20	— 23				
— 14	N. Armstrong	20	117	400	— 23				
— 14	J. Bunting	6	400	470	— 23				
— 14	R. Wood	10	378	201	— 23				
— 14	R. C. Dillon	4	200	200	— 23				
— 14	R. Watson	17	213	400	— 23				
— 14	T. Bradshaw	14	165	207	— 23				
— 14	Dr. Baird	10	155	400	— 23				
— 14	Dr. Cox	7	411	100	— 23				
— 14	J. Parsons	4	20	20	— 23				
— 14	E. Bates	13	20	400	— 23				
— 14	S. Mumme	9	122	230	— 23				
— 14	Bp. Blomfield	11	241	301	— 23				
— 14	A. Reed	11	300	300	— 23				
— 14	Dr. Chalmers	10	200	427	— 23				
— 14	W. H. B.	11	13	200	— 23				
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— 14	J. L. Galton	24	23	600	— 23				
— 14	E. Parsons	8	204	220	— 23				
— 14	T. W. Carr	21	225	513	— 23				
— 14	H. M'Neile	10	254	400	— 23				
— 14	D. Some	13	300	304	— 23				
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— 14	H. M'Neile	6	323	100	— 23				
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T. Biscoe

J. Parsons

W. H. Cooper

J. Davies

Dr. Fyfe Smith

T. Dale

F. J. Stainforth

W. Jay

Archdeacon Law

M. H. Seymour

C. Bradley

F. J. Stainforth

H. Melvill

W. H. Smith

B. W. Noel

E. Thompson

H. Stowell

J. Gwyther

H. Melvill

T. Gibbon

W. Spencer

J. Parsons

JOSHUA.

E. Batey

J. Parsons

M. H. Seymour

W. Borrow

J. Parsons

J. Birchall

J. Parsons

JUDGES.

H. S. Plumptre

J. Latta

T. Mortimer

RUTH.

Hugh Hughes

B. W. Noel

ISAAHUEL.

J. H. Evans

E. J. Wilcock

Dr. Deakry

Dr. O'Sullivan

H. Blunt

J. Cumming

W. H. Smith

H. Melvill

J. Parsons

J. Hambleton

D. Moore

H. Stowell

Dr. Chalmers

W. W. Champneys

H. Melvill

C. Bradley

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2 SAMUEL.				PSALMS.			
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— 32, 33		43	333	viii. 3, 4	H. M. Vickers	49	303
xxii. 31	T. Dale	31	371	— 4	W. Neville	29	63
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1 KINGS.				— 7, 8	W. H. Hill	40	298
iii. 1	H. Thompson	37	69	— 11	T. E. Hankinson	32	86
x. 27	John Jessopp	50	306	xvii. 4	B. W. Noel	36	335
xiii. 30		50	365	xxi. 1	T. Dale	49	29
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xxii. 23	E. Bickersteth	42	367	— 13, 14	D. Moore	40	417
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vii. 9	W. Wilkinson	30	451	xxxvi. 1	H. M'Neile	39	381
x. 9	J. Sherman	26	93	— 6	H. Melvill	46	101
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xix. 14	T. Bissy	50	107	— 5	W. Curling	31	16
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1 CHRONICLES.				xlv. 4	J. Cumming	35	277
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— 41	C. Gilbert	40	45	lv. 8	G. Bateman	34	519
vii. 12-15	T. Mortimer	27	169	— 17	Dr. Rudge	33	468
xvi. 12	H. Hollis	29	373	lvi. 8	W. Jay	39	458
xx. 9	C. A. Maguire	50	393	lvii. 11	J. F. Denham	26	26
xxxii. 33	T. Mortimer	30	479	lviii. 7, 8	C. Bradley	30	445
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xxxv. 21	W. Jay	44	96	lv. 2		45	531
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EZRA.				—		45	533
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xix. 25	T. Hitchin	39	112	lxxxv. 6	J. Cumming	39	48
xxv. 5	T. Craig	43	569	— 10	R. W. Sibthorp	28	194
xxvii. 10	G. Bateman	30	465	lxxxvii. 3	J. Parsons	35	57
xxx. 23	H. Melvill	47	69	—	J. Cumming	44	421
xxxiii. 16, 17	J. Cumming	47	433	lxxxix. 15	J. Garwood	28	333
xxxiv. 21, 22	W. Borrowes	44	350	— 15, 16	E. Tottonham	34	235
xxxv. 10	J. Carver	37	481	—	T. J. Judkin	40	86
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— 33	S. Ramsey	31	209	—	Dr. Raffles	33	291
	G. Bateman	48	257	—	B. W. Noel	45	49

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scv. 6, 7	T. Dale	40	289	1,121	—	J. Jessopp	47	3-2	1,865
— 7, 8	Dr. Raffles	43	229	1,104	—	Dr. Newton	50	200	1,360
scvii. 10, 11	F. Close	34	337	884	xxiii. 17	H. G. Watkins	47	76	1,230
— 12	H. Melville	43	99	1,099	— 26	D. Moore	45	113	1,100
iii. 3	W. W. Champneys	42	436	1,084	xxiv. 30, 31	W. Neville	29	358	747
— 10	B. W. Noel	47	5	1,216	xxvii. 19	J. Collinson	31	311	789
— 13	J. Hambleton	23	402	727	xxviii. 26	T. Dale	49	69	1,275
— 13, 14	B. W. Noel	54	329	863	viii. 8	R. Amalie	32	71	801
— 19	J. Parsons	15	352	64	— 18	H. Melville	36	137	905
vi. 4, 5	C. Bradley	38	309	906	xxx. 12	J. Hambleton	27	393	701
vii. 1	B. W. Noel	38	229	902	— 24-28	C. Morris	27	280	684
— 7	J. H. Evans	38	209	902	xxxi. 30	J. Young	32	64	601
x. 3	D. Young	26	109	659	—	—	—	—	—
xi. 10	G. T. Noel	37	251	487	—	—	—	—	—
—	Dr. Hudg	29	142	736	ii. 11	J. Parsons	42	227	1,078
—	T. Dale	39	429	1096	— 13	H. F. Fell	37	405	945
—	—	34	269	858	iii. 14	J. O. Parr	28	301	721
—	J. Parsons	39	313	992	iv. 2	J. Clayton	33	301	837
—	W. M. Hunting	29	78	733	— 10	M. G. Rensford	35	211	843
—	J. Parsons	42	235	1,079	—	H. Melville	40	411	1,028
—	Bp. Denison	34	505	872	—	S. Robins	42	361	1,080
—	S. Robins	29	443	752	xi. 1	H. J. Newbery	25	145	635
—	J. H. Evans	34	261	861	—	P. Hall	35	373	902
—	J. Cumming	42	281	1,081	— 1-6	H. Melville	46	449	1,370
—	J. A. James	40	531	1,034	— 7	T. Biney	46	136	1,126
—	H. Melville	44	1	1,124	— 84	H. W. Noel	39	267	881
—	J. Burnett	28	93	708	— 7	T. Dale	38	413	971
—	D. Moore	43	498	1,118	— 14	P. P. Gilbert	31	821	797
—	Hugh Hughes	34	229	858	—	H. Melville	37	177	936
—	H. Melville	36	279	912	i. 13	T. B. Baker	30	303	767
—	J. Parsons	32	302	817	ii. 4	S. Ramsey	27	420	702
—	J. Hambleton	36	487	923	iv. 18	T. Watson	36	64	808
—	H. Melville	41	519	1,061	v. 11	W. Jay	48	13	1,244
—	Dr. Wait	49	425	1,286	vi. 6	J. Cumming	44	503	1,182
—	M. Welbourn	37	12	926	—	—	—	—	—
—	W. Curling	31	377	792	—	—	—	—	—
—	S. Green	25	164	638	i. 3	—	—	—	—
—	W. Yate	27	371	668	— 5, 6	B. W. Noel	36	421	910
—	W. Carter	40	101	1,010	— 9	W. Gilmer	48	400	1,267
—	E. Sidney	37	345	943	— 27	W. W. Champneys	37	460	947
—	W. Nunn	35	146	895	— 5	J. F. Winy	37	219	935
—	A. G. Pemberton	48	69	1,948	— 11, 12	G. Weight	46	339	1,209
—	E. Bull	30	17	758	— 13	Dr. Cox	32	209	809
—	H. Melville	38	229	963	— 13	H. Melville	40	255	1,286
—	W. Neville	40	206	1,016	— 13	J. Parsons	45	361	1,177
—	D. Kelly	41	563	1,043	viii. 20	T. Mortimer	31	366	798
—	E. Pizey	48	250	1,259	—	M. H. Seymour	34	297	892
—	C. Morris	25	207	639	—	J. Cumming	37	365	944
—	W. Dawson	26	193	628	—	R. J. McGhee	40	378	1,211
—	Dr. Newton	31	251	786	—	J. Parsons	29	178	738
—	Dr. Dillon	33	263	830	—	H. Cole	44	117	1,130
—	H. Melville	45	315	1,178	—	—	—	—	—
—	T. Biney	40	17	1,006	— 10	T. Snow	38	285	986
—	T. Dale	37	411	945	— 11	B. W. Noel	36	363	917
—	—	32	50	800	— 31	M. H. Seymour	30	220	808
—	—	—	—	—	—	W. Yate	27	389	887
—	—	—	—	—	—	A. Henric	37	329	943
—	—	—	—	—	—	H. Melville	31	361	798
—	—	—	—	—	—	S. Robins	36	416	919
—	—	—	—	—	—	C. Bradley	44	364	1,145
—	—	—	—	—	—	D. Moore	47	265	1,281
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	39	200	860
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	42	110	1,071
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	34	345	896
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	39	305	882
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	42	361	799
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	49	181	1,281
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	31	134	7-1
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	34	131	8-3
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	29	2-1	742
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	31	8	776
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	42	212	1,277
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	40	223	1,018
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	8	703
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	30	166	603
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	35	245	845
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Texts.	Names.	Vols.	Pp.	Nov.	Texts.	Names.	Vols.	Pp.	Nov.
xii. 11-14.	J. Parsons	41	351	1,032	xvi. 18	T. Mortimer	24	210	715
xiii. 1	J. H. Evans	27	249	640		J. R. Barber	41	313	1,050
— 7	Archd. Law	33	360	840		Dr. Raffles	40	289	1,288
xiv. 8, 9	Dr. Hamilton	50	285	1,314	— 21	H. Melville	45	109	1,164
	T. Gibson	47	238	1,230	— 26	G. Weight	38	245	983
						J. Sherman	42	213	1,103
						T. Gibson	47	125	1,223
						W. Dawson	43	47	639
						D. Moore	47	30	1,319
						B. W. Noel	50	373	1,319
							50	389	1,320
						H. Melville	25	191	1,102
						S. Robins	45	402	1,185
						J. Williams	38	142	954
						D. Laing	40	33	1,006
						J. Macdonald	25	123	634
						J. Cumming	44	406	1,146
						J. H. Evans	33	425	844
						Dr. Simon	35	33	874
						H. Melville	50	69	1,301
							33	37	638
						J. Hamilton	40	66	1,006
						M. H. Seymour	33	506	844
							44	375	1,145
						R. L. Mill	40	227	1,284
						T. Dale	37	107	811
						W. Harrison	33	229	835
						H. Melville	48	21	1,345
						W. Jay	30	437	988
						Dr. Raffles	41	37	1,137
						S. Robins	31	345	791
						B. W. Noel	49	108	1,277
						C. Cator	36	223	842
						T. Hines	42	156	1,074
						R. Bryant	37	173	834
						W. Jay	28	30	705
						Dr. Raffles	33	521	847
						H. Melville	43	248	1,106
						H. Melville	30	30	978
						H. Melville	48	287	1,384
						J. Parsons	48	287	1,384
						T. Hines	20	1	729
						C. Bradley	49	387	1,093
						Hugh Hughes	45	404	1,178
						B. W. Noel	36	311	914
						E. Hall	32	145	804
						Hugh Hughes	33	416	843
						W. B. Mackenzie	37	167	834
						S. Bridge	44	431	1,148
						B. W. Noel	30	99	808
						Dr. Krummacker	59	407	945
						John Dixon	43	50	1,046
						S. Robins	29	325	746
						Archd. Robinson	30	1	752
						Dr. M'Call	34	99	850
						E. N. Kirk	31	428	708
						B. W. Noel	30	181	904
							30	145	805
						T. Dale	43	309	1,308
						C. Bradley	48	189	1,281
						H. Melville	46	21	1,190
						B. W. Noel	26	169	807
						J. Clayton Jun.	33	113	830
						R. Ankin	38	800	975
						Dr. Cope	30	247	764
						T. Gibson	47	216	1,229
						B. W. Noel	28	77	657
						W. Neville	28	164	712
						W. Dodsworth	31	88	779
						H. Stowell	41	409	1,056

Names.	Vols.	Pp	No.	Total
T. Mortimer	28	110	727	xii. 1
H. M'Neale	40	325	1,290	—b—8
T. Binney	32	313	814	—
W. H. Clapper	30	397	771	—11—
H. Melville	34	185	857	—12—
M. H. Seymour	45	13	1,154	—18—
T. Jones	47	79	1,220	—21—
T. Dale	45	480	1,184	—xiii. 1—
J. Cumming	40	121	1,011	—6—
A. G. Pemberton	41	837	1,051	—11—
E. Thompson	38	323	905	—
J. G. Swins	42	41	1,067	—
H. Stowell	45	418	1,170	—
J. Thompson	38	264	863	—12—
M. H. Seymour	31	392	792	—
J. Parsons	32	372	816	xiv. 7
H. Melville	45	329	1,174	—22—
Achd. S. Wilberforce	45	457	1,182	xv. 4
C. Bradley	42	163	1,075	—15—21
C. Hebert	35	325	889	—16—
G. Jeans	27	323	606	—30—

ROMANS.

II. M'Neale	42	310	1,082	3
H. Melville	31	289	788	i. 10
T. Dale	47	117	1,223	—12, 13—
J. F. Denham	38	429	971	—18—
H. Stowell	47	305	1,234	—19, 20—
J. Hambleton	29	309	745	—21—
J. Harding	41	139	1,043	—22—24
B. W. Noel	46	389	1,212	—23, 24—
	36	9	900	—25—
	36	19	900	—30—
	46	365	1,211	ii. 1, 2.
	46	437	1,215	—
	45	271	1,170	—2—
J. Sawer	29	341	747	—
J. Haslegrave	29	25	730	—
Henry Hughes	31	104	780	—4, 5—
Dr. Burns	32	183	807	—14—
J. Williams	38	457	972	—6—
W. Hoops	38	31	962	—7—
C. Rawlings	48	485	1,280	—11—
H. Melville	28	235	738	—
W. M. Harding	34	445	888	—
E. Thompson	28	35	705	—
T. Dale	28	41	656	—
	46	405	1,218	—16—
D. Moote	31	121	781	—21—23
H. Melville	32	514	823	iv. 1, 2
G. Clayton	25	133	636	—4—
S. Robins	29	228	740	—20—
Dr. Leitch	43	438	1,115	—
Achd. S. Wilberforce	35	409	808	v. 7
B. W. Noel	44	254	1,186	v. 7, 8
J. Williams	47	165	1,226	vi. 5—
W. Curling	25	279	643	—11—
Dr. Harding	34	457	869	—19—
H. Melville	34	483	870	vii. 29
E. N. Kirk	29	128	735	—29—31
F. Miller	42	44	1,028	ix. 11
T. Dale	31	1	774	—22—
J. Hambleton	32	7	798	—
B. W. Noel	27	81	682	—24—
C. Driscoll	31	49	777	x. 3, 4
J. Hambleton	48	197	1,256	—12—
T. Binney	34	1	848	—17—
C. Benson	47	491	1,240	xi. 23, 24
H. Stowell	37	130	932	xi. 23—25
G. Weight	49	185	1,101	xi. 26, 27
D. Moore	45	511	1,185	—
J. Hamilton	47	21	1,217	xii. 26
S. Bridge	25	397	650	—27—
Dr. Chalmers	35	263	911	xiii. 1—3
B. W. Noel	41	307	1,050	—8—
T. Mortimer	25	165	637	—
H. J. Newbery	35	397	893	—
H. Melville	29	307	750	—13—
Bp. Blomfield	18	53	1,247	—
H. W. Noel	50	357	1,318	—
H. M. Villiers	59	436	1,372	xiv. 15
W. Curling				

Names.	Vols.	Pp	No.
T. Dale	32	57	801
F. Close	33	255	836
J. Garwood	43	405	1,114
T. Mortimer	32	139	805
H. Melville	25	248	641
H. M'Neale	27	17	679
Dr. Cruik	45	193	1,165
J. Hambleton	37	405	948
Theo Smith	42	113	1,072
J. F. Witty	31	114	780
J. Burnet	34	197	857
S. Bridge	35	526	899
J. N. Pearson	40	503	1,033
J. F. Russell	31	496	794
H. O'Neill	34	515	872
C. Simeon	49	47	1,273
Henry Hughes	27	121	684
Dr. Hunting	27	37	680
J. Parsons	28	230	716
T. J. Judkin	32	413	818
T. Binney	49	403	1,293
	43	241	1,104

I CORINTHIANS.

Dr. Collyer	31	67	777
Dr. Wait	40	275	1,020
H. M. Villiers	47	61	1,219
E. Thompson	34	154	855
F. Close	39	357	994
G. Weight	33	165	832
J. Bowers	26	381	675
J. H. Evans	28	85	701
Dr. Dillon	30	254	765
G. F. Galaher	49	128	1,278
J. Sherman	31	174	783
J. Haslegrave	33	189	833
F. Jobson	31	241	786
T. Dale	39	149	981
W. Owen	41	144	1,043
T. Dale	44	227	1,135
C. Rawlings	37	69	930
M. H. Seymour	44	343	1,143
J. Haslegrave	26	281	669
R. L. Connell	27	181	688
W. C. Ulmer	29	246	741
E. Temple	32	187	807
T. W. H. Gurney	42	372	1,086
H. Melville	26	201	664
W. Dodsworth	25	139	635
E. Thompson	36	183	907
W. W. Champneys	40	185	1,015
S. Ramsey	30	82	757
Dr. Stebbing	39	269	991
H. Melville	49	249	1,266
R. H. Herschell	34	498	871
Dr. Dillon	31	433	794
G. Weight	44	109	1,130
J. H. Evans	31	423	867
I. Thompson	31	145	7-2
J. Harding	30	365	770
H. H. Beamish	33	147	831
S. Robins	38	176	660
J. Hambleton	44	241	1,136-7
T. Sedger	39	173	985
H. Melville	26	1	653
J. H. Evans	31	337	790
D. Moore	44	186	1,133
C. Bridley	47	90	1,221
S. Robins	33	87	1,221
T. T. Leete	37	415	945
	37	420	945
S. Robins	27	413	762
	37	233	836
J. Parsons	33	7	873
J. Bushnell	28	111	709
S. Robins	37	41	928
Bp. Wilson	49	117	1,278
J. F. Witty	41	184	1,045
	41	210	1,046
	41	227	1,047
T. Dale			

Text.	Names.	Votes.	N. Y. Trials.
rev. 15	H. Stowell	77 305	11 7
-40	M. H. Seymour	43 2	110 -7 8
rv. 6	W. Holston	34 3	49 -8
-19	H. McNeill	27 377	730 -
-20	W. W. Chapman	31 494	571 -
-	G. M. Dodd	42 71	10 5 -9
-26	H. McNeill	27 1	9 6 -10
-34	R. Eden	27 4	8 6 -
-43-44	S. Green	27 2	6 0 -14
-53	Dr. Dehon	25 17	634 -14
-	J. M. Landon	25 1	746 -
-	S. J. Lee	25 8	11 13 -
-55-57	Dr. H. Shaw	25 26	5 9 -15
xvi. 9	J. H. Abelson	25 34	12 2 -
xvi. 13	Dr. Watt	25 140	9 4 -

CORINTHIANS.

i. 4	S. Robins	47 187	1227 -21 13
-3-7	E. Chas	37 3	8 5 -1
ii. 11	D. Kelly	37 124	2 -2
-15-16	J. Leary	37 324	1213 -7
iii. 2, 3	J. H. DeGrave	32 7	1070 -0
-7, 8	H. McNeill	2	706 -8-10
-7-9	R. Burgess	43 315	1264 -10
-17	J. Cumming	45 129	1,114 -11 8
iv. 5	Dr. Burnett	21 220	752 -15
-6	J. Davies	41 250	1,204 -15
-7	Dr. Dealtry	42 393	1,088 -10
v. 1	Dr. Steage	35 122	90 -10
-1-4	Dr. Mortimer	41 296	1,045 -iv. 1
-6-9	Dr. Collyer	31 316	789 -
-7	W. Goode	42 447	1,001 -1-3
-14, 15	H. Stowell	43 465	1,117 -1-7
-17	T. Snow	25 30	620 -
-	W. Hancock	41 171	1,014 -13
-18, 19	G. Fisk	50 113	1,274 -25
-19	E. Thompson	32 92	802 -30
-20	S. Robins	26 401	676 -v. 1
-	H. Stowell	41 396	1,054 -18
-21	J. Sherman	48 149	1,253 -24, 25
vi. 2	Dr. Candlish	35 306	891 -25
-13	J. Alexander	36 170	996 -25
-17, 18	J. Horton	44 399	1,146 -25-27
vii. 1	G. A. Rogers	47 85	1,221 -27
-9	J. Irvine	39 119	982 -vi. 4
viii. 5	J. Parsons	32 471	821 -
-8, 9	W. H. Cooper	42 68	1,039 -
ix. 15	H. McNeill	47 16	1,216 -10
x. 3	Dr. Raffles	33 393	842 -12, 13
-4	J. Parsons	30 177	762 -17
xi. 3	H. McNeill	48 181	1,225 -24
-14	H. Stowell	41 467	1,058 -
xii. 1-4	J. Cumming	43 19	1,093 -24
xiii. 1	C. L. Yorke	48 37	1,246 -24
xiii. 1-4	E. Thompson	46 176	1,170 -24
xiii. 1	B. W. Noel	47 29	1,169 -24
-11	E. M. Ficker	47 224	1,220 -24
-11	E. Fisk	51 47	1,216 -24

COLOSSIANS.

ii. 2	M. H. Seymour	39 76	904 -27
-5	J. H. DeGrave	47 265	1,265 -24
-10	W. Jay	41 21	1,113 -24
iii. 10-13	B. W. Noel	38 26	1,261 -24
-18	J. Cumming	45 17	1,166 -24
-28	W. Nunn	34 231	820 -14-26
iv. 4, 5	J. A. James	39 29	1,265 -14-26
-18	S. Robins	37 29	794 -16
-21	J. G. Foster	7 74	682 -21
-1	H. McNeill	9 15	1,101 -21
-1	J. Harding	27 5	691 -44 15
-12	B. W. Noel	41 1	1,225 -24
-14	J. A. James	49 305	1,280 -24
-18	J. L. Goble	31 20	751 -24
-22	H. McNeill	33 181	815 -24
-24	J. W. C. Cunningham	30 26	767 -18
-1	W. L. Brown	31 194	1,015 -18
-1	J. H. DeGrave	31 241	715 -18
-7	H. W. Stowell	29 180	712 -18

Names.	Votes.	N. Y. Trials.
Dr. Raffles	6 127	94
J. Stratton	25 169	750
W. H. Deane	16 420	677
Dr. Chalmers	25 210	665
-	21 21	776
G. Weight	50 87	1,202
H. Stowell	27 25	810
C. Deane	27 28	918
H. McNeill	8 300	711
W. J. Jones	4 1	8
H. C. Deane	41 51	1,170
H. C. Deane	21 17	846
W. J. Jones	42 29	81

PHILIPPIANS.

B. W. Noel	41 30	1,115
C. Lee	41 59	1,065
J. P. Crasman	25 408	896
J. Thompson	29 300	719
H. McNeill	30 461	774
W. Wilkinson	29 17	730
B. W. Noel	40 169	1,013
Dr. Hannah	42 73	1,070
J. Waddington	36 479	922
B. W. Noel	30 285	767
S. Robins	43 481	1,118
H. Stowell	38 437	972
J. Parsons	47 281	1,233
T. J. Judkin	44 93	1,129
W. J. Jones	32 451	820
Hugh Hughes	40 116	1,010
B. W. Noel	50 241	1,312
T. Mortimer	29 81	981
-	20 47	731
E. Thompson	31 322	749
Dr. Rudge	31 502	796
B. W. Noel	48 432	1,269
Dr. M. Leod	80 101	757
J. Stratton	29 111	734
B. W. Noel	29 67	731
J. H. Rinder	39 67	755
C. Rawlings	44 104	1,129
T. Watson	48 235	1,218
W. Jay	40 165	1,282
Dr. Hanger	27 141	616
M. W. Jones	35 216	883
M. H. Seymour	40 431	1,029
D. Moore	46 333	1,209
R. Aitken	38 493	975
B. W. Noel	41 75	1,039
W. Jay	32 345	815
E. Hoare	36 413	822
J. H. Evans	39 197	860
W. F. Vance	32 413	822

PHILIPPIANS.

A. Pope	25 169	612
W. C. Minor	39 163	750
D. Kelly	31 149	713
S. Robins	20 283	711
H. J. McGee	11 17	1,122
A. Jay	2 13	614
C. R. Kelly	41 27	1,111
H. McNeill	27 36	611
A. J. Deane	23 117	711
L. Deane	25 101	911
W. W. Noel	3 590	1,122
J. Thompson	45 413	1,212
L. Deane	42 15	1,101
H. Stowell	2 115	1,111
M. H. Seymour	40 1	1,111
H. Stowell	3 117	701
Dr. Hanger	17 47	721
G. Chas	45 1	1,220
W. W. Chapman	31 10	891
J. P. Crasman	23 320	891
J. H. Evans	45 5	1,067
G. Jones	27 201	1,111
B. W. Noel	19 11	1,067
T. J. Judkin	50 39	1,318

Texts.	Names.	Vols.	Pgs.	No.	Texts.	Names.	Vols.	Pgs.	No.
xiii. 1, 2	J. Williams	38	328	969	— 24, 25	T. Mortimer	29	153	737
— 2	J. Parsons	39	309	962	— 25	W. Jay	32	338	815
— 3	H. Melvill	34	473	879	— 26	T. Jackson	50	412	1,231
— 4	T. Binney	39	205	965	— 27	Dr. Dillon	28	307	721
— 11	J. Letts	32	15	798	— 28	H. Stowell	45	238	1,188
— 14	P. Maitland	37	91	930	— 29	E. Thompson	41	327	1,142
xiii. 7	Dr. Hannah	43	38	1,006	— 30	J. Williams	31	40	828
— 7, 8	A. E. Rogers	38	410	970	— 31	W. Jay	31	112	847
— 8	Dr. Wardlaw	50	184	1,308	— 32	Dr. Burnett	34	151	867
— 11, 13	C. Bradley	40	21	1,018	— 33	H. Stowell	37	269	949
— 14	B. W. Noel	38	421	971	— 34	W. Burrows	38	233	666
— 17	D. Moore	46	373	1,211	— 35	Dr. Chalmers	31	37	777
— 22	H. Stowell	47	297	1,234	— 36	J. Clayton, Jun.	42	147	1,051
—	J. Hambleton	49	92	1,249	— 37	T. Dale	50	29	1,299
	JAMES.				— 38	T. Dale	43	545	1,121
i. 25	R. L. Connell	27	57	681	— 39	H. McNeile	43	395	1,113
— 26	J. Haslegrave	46	219	1,202	— 40	T. Dale	37	264	1,038
— 27	S. Robins	28	137	711	— 41	J. F. Russell	35	381	832
— 28	W. Curling	36	147	855	— 42	2 JOHN.			
— 29	C. Rawlings	35	394	892	— 43	W. Jay	25	361	648
— 30	Dr. Dillon	31	276	787	— 44	3 JOHN.			
— 31	J. F. Witty	34	377	885	— 45	H. Stowell	43	340	1,110
— 32	W. Dodsworth	31	490	796	— 46	JUDE.			
— 33	H. Melvill	45	1	1,154	— 47	W. Spencer	37	424	946
— 34	R. Young	30	285	954	— 48	B. W. Noel	41	437	1,056
	I PETER.				— 49	W. Curling	42	195	1,076
i. 3, 4	W. Jay	38	10	951	— 50	M. H. Seymour	34	385	866
— 5	J. Russell	41	529	1,061	— 51	H. Stowell	41	433	1,057
— 6	W. Jay	49	63	1,276	— 52	REVELATION.			
— 7	W. Curling	32	297	813	— 53	E. J. Wilcocks	27	238	621
— 8	J. Murryat	40	496	1,032	— 54	J. C. Burns	40	471	1,031
— 9	W. Temple	40	383	1,027	— 55	H. Melvill	38	57	954
— 10	G. Wright	35	465	897	— 56	S. Bridge	49	273	1,267
— 11	T. Dale	29	406	750	— 57	T. Mortimer	25	151	632
— 12	H. Melvill	29	101	734	— 58	T. Myers	25	283	642
— 13	J. Cunningham	44	438	1,148	— 59	M. Wellborn	45	547	1,187
— 14	H. Stowell	26	131	661	— 60	D. Kelly	33	104	839
— 15	G. Bateman	31	607	796	— 61	J. Statten	46	117	1,195
— 16	A. H. Symonds	35	389	892	— 62	S. Bridge	41	269	1,061
— 17	Dr. S. Walderforce	37	351	943	— 63	G. Wright	50	323	1,316
— 18	M. Vaughan	50	54	1,300	— 64	B. W. Noel	43	51	1,094
— 19	T. Binney	30	47	755	— 65	E. Tuttenham	34	308	862
— 20	W. Jay	32	395	813	— 66	B. W. Noel	43	40	1,094
— 21	Dr. Bunting	31	21	786	— 67	Dr. Rudge	26	105	608
— 22	Hugh Hughes	46	356	1,210	— 68	Dr. Watt	41	101	1,040
— 23	H. Melvill	40	249	1,019	— 69	B. W. Noel	49	303	1,292
— 24	J. Haslegrave	27	126	685	— 70	T. Snow	29	365	874
— 25	T. Gibson	50	269	1,310	— 71	H. M. Vilbers	47	449	1,243
— 26	T. Mortimer	37	138	935	— 72	W. Jay	36	42	1,001
— 27	B. W. Noel	44	157	1,132	— 73	T. Jackson	45	383	1,178
— 28	T. E. Hankinson	26	372	674	— 74	J. Parsons	39	341	983
— 29	H. Melvill	46	53	1,192	— 75	H. Melvill	39	73	757
— 30	T. Mortimer	37	185	935	— 76	J. A. James	48	277	1,261
— 31	J. Parsons	41	365	1,053	— 77	G. Wright	46	421	1,214
	2 PETER.				— 78	G. S. Drew	46	157	1,198
i. 5, 6	W. H. Medhurst	52	153	806	— 79	Dr. Searns	31	285	787
— 7	D. Moore	42	382	1,087	— 80	J. Gossett	30	491	774
— 8	H. Stowell	43	472	1,117	— 81	H. Melvill	36	78	953
— 9	J. Hambleton	38	315	966	— 82	Bp. Wilson	49	389	1,292
— 10	H. M. Vilbers	44	447	1,149	— 83	T. J. Judson	28	285	729
— 11	J. Watson	27	164	687	— 84	W. Burrows	25	345	847
— 12	T. Binney	44	259	1,195	— 85	T. B. Baker	38	549	976
— 13	E. Parsons	31	223	786	— 86	T. Gibson	48	28	1,245
— 14	J. Forster	37	72	929	— 87	T. Mortimer	35	433	865
— 15	R. Burgess	50	405	1,321	— 88	M. H. Seymour	38	53	827
— 16	H. Melvill	45	25	874	— 89	H. Edwards	50	380	1,319
— 17	J. C. Burns	40	438	1,029	— 90	J. H. Stewart	49	217	1,294
— 18	J. Cunningham	47	409	924	— 91	R. Montgomery	43	553	1,131
— 19		37	203	935	— 92	T. Roberts	36	347	915
— 20		37	321	942	— 93	B. W. Noel	36	84	993
	1 JOHN.				— 94	Henry Hughes	27	225	691
i. 1-7	C. J. Goodhart	26	119	659	— 95	J. Skinner	45	145	1,102
— 8	B. W. Noel	42	329	1,084	— 96	T. Grimfield	43	598	1,119
— 9	J. Williams	42	345	1,085	— 97	J. Parsons	30	161	761
— 10	J. Williams	26	177	662	— 98	W. Chalmers	47	357	1,243
— 11	T. Binney	50	454	1,323	— 99	S. Robins	31	161	763
— 12					— 100				

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
<i>Church Pastoral-Aid Society.</i>			<i>Champfneys, W. W.</i>			<i>O'Sullivan, Dr. ...</i>		
Brodrick, W. J. ...	36	914	Curling, W.	39	982	Shaw, R.	12	334
Dale, T.	29	729	Laing, D.	40	1,006	<i>Ladies' Negro Education Soc.</i>		
.....	33	836	Williams, J.	35	890	Melville, H.	35	874
Gilbert, P. P.	33	839	<i>Fever Hospital.</i>			Sibthorp, R. W. ...	10	275
Hambleton, J.	49	1,295	Melville, H.	35	882	Stowell, H.	32	823
Hebert, C.	35	889	Noel, Hon. B. W. .	15	403	<i>Liverpool Southern Hospital.</i>		
.....	37	936	Shepherd, Dr.	1	10	M'Neile, H.	47	1,216
M'Neile, H.	35	887	<i>Gospel Tract Society.</i>			<i>London Aged Christian Society.</i>		
Seymour, M. H. ...	35	897	Borrows, W.	8	228	Baker, T. B.	30	767
Stowell, H.	28	712	Irving, E.	8	228	<i>London City Mission.</i>		
.....	32	819	<i>Guardian Society.</i>			Evans, J. H.	27	690
Weight, G.	35	897	Mann, I.	14	380	Noel, B. W.	30	767
<i>Continental Society.</i>			Marsh, W.	7	192	Russell, Lord W. .	32	822
Armstrong, N.	17	444	<i>Hibernian Society.</i>			<i>London Female Mission.</i>		
Balteil, H. B.	17	440	Cooke, Dr. H.	34	866—7	Hall, P.	35	892
Galton, J. L.	24	606	Irving, E.	6	160	Kirk, E. N.	31	793
Gordon, Dr.	8	221	<i>Hospital for Consumption.</i>			Young, R.	38	964
Hill, H.	12	327	Stowell, H.	49	1,294	<i>London Female Penitentiary.</i>		
M'Neile, H.	6	169	<i>Home & Colonial School Society.</i>			Melville, H.	20	508
Morison, Dr. J. .	6	170	Villiers, H. M. ...	49	1,297	Sibthorp, R. W. ...	8	207
Mortimer, T.	8	221	<i>Humane Society.</i>			Wilcox, J.	8	207
Noel, G. T.	10	273	Dillon, Dr.	33	831	<i>London Seaman's Society.</i>		
Thomson, Dr. A. .	10	273	Gilly, W. S.	8	209	Clayton, J. Jun. .	6	157
<i>Dispensaries.</i>			<i>Indigent Blind Visiting Society.</i>			<i>London Society for Teaching the</i>		
Bull, E.	36	902	Robins, S.	47	1,227	<i>Blind to Read.</i>		
Dale, T.	47	1,228	<i>Irish Church Education Society.</i>			Noel, B. W.	49	1,292
Denham, J. F.	13	364	Beresford, M. G. .	35	883	.....	39	991
Melville, H.	21	539	<i>Irish Clergy Relief.</i>			<i>Lying-in Hospital.</i>		
Mortimer, T.	11	289	Robins, S.	27	702	Harcourt, Arbp. ...	11	287
Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	10	262	<i>Irish Society.</i>			Ryder, Bp.	6	156
<i>District Visiting Societies.</i>			Beamish, H. H. ...	14	388	<i>Magdalen Hospital.</i>		
Benson, C.	28	715	Noel, B. W.	30	765	Carr, Bp.	11	286
Cunningham, J. W. .	30	767	Stowell, H.	22	557	Noel, Hon. B. W. .	41	1,055
Curling, W.	23	584	.....	24	605	Wilberforce, Archd. S. 4 ³	1,115	
Dale, T.	21	532	Sumner, Bp. J. B. .	10	268	<i>Metropolis Churches' Fund.</i>		
Hughes, Hugh.	36	912	<i>Irish Evangelical Society.</i>			Beamish, H. H. ...	33	831
M'Caul, Dr.	34	852	Burnet, J.	12	338	Blomfield, Bp.	29	750
Melville, H.	23	587	Cooper, W. H.	30	771	Dale, T.	40	1,021
.....	45	1,154	.....	33	838	M'Neile, H.	39	995
Noel, B. W.	46	1,211	<i>Jews' Society.</i>			Montgomery, R. .	35	894
Piampre, H. S. .	31	789	Dillon, Dr.	10	267	<i>Monthly Tract Society.</i>		
Robins, S.	42	1,082-3	Hodson, Archd. .	14	378	Beamish, H. H. ...	39	994
Stowell, H.	26	661	Jerram, C.	12	324	<i>Naval and Military Bible Soc.</i>		
Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	12	337	Marsh, W.	9	239	Marks, R.	10	271
..... Bp. J. B. .	16	429	Simeon, C.	8	203	Melville, H.	14	879
.....	19	496	.....	16	428	<i>Newfoundland &c. School Society.</i>		
Witty, J. F.	34	857	Thomason, T.	10	280	Anderson, J. S. M. .	45	1,180
<i>Ear Dispensary.</i>			Melville, H.	36	917	Brandram, A.	7	178
Colls, J. F.	38	953	<i>King's College Hospital.</i>			Bridge, T. F. H. .	38	972
Dodsworth, W. .	39	996	Melville, H.	36	917	Budd, H.	10	263
<i>Episcopal Floating Church.</i>			Benson, C.	37	948	Childe, C. F.	50	1,301
Stowell, H.	47	1,234	Jackson, T.	42	1,073	Close, F.	35	877
<i>Evangelical Alliance.</i>			<i>Ladies' Charity Sch. (Snow Hill).</i>			.....	43	1,114
James, J. A.	50	1,305	Dale, T.	37	945	Dale, T.	37	938
<i>European Missionary Society.</i>			.....	42	1,068	Haslegrave, J.	34	853
Stowell, H.	30	762	.....	43	1,121	Hawtreay, C. S. .	9	232
Tottenham, E.	37	943	Fell, H. F.	37	945	Melville, H.	32	820
<i>Eye and Ear Infirmary.</i>			Hughes, Hugh.	42	1,080	Sibthorp, R. W. ...	11	291
Croly, Dr.	15	391	Montgomery, R. .	43	1,122	Sidney, E.	30	769
<i>Female Orphan Asylum.</i>			.....	43	1,123	Stowell, H.	43	1,121
Boothell, Bp.	8	206	Stowell, H.	30	763	.....	47	1,240
Dillon, Dr.	13	355	<i>Ladies' Hibernian Female School</i>			Wilberforce, Arch. S	41	1,059
Stowell, H.	37	940	<i>Society.</i>			Wilcox, J.	12	317
<i>Female Orphan Asylum, Pad-</i>			Galton, J. L.	30	772	<i>Philo-Judean Society.</i>		
<i>dington.</i>			M'Neile, H.	17	436	M'Neile, H.	14	376
Dale, T.	44	1,146	.....	43	1,112	M'Neile, H.	19	494
Moore, D.	40	1,030	<i>Female Protection Society.</i>			Stowell, H.	41	1,064
<i>Female Protection Society.</i>			Counter, J. H. ...	43	1,006	<i>Philanthropic Society.</i>		
.....						Anderson, J. S. M. .	39	995

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	No.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	No.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	No.
Benson, C.	4	116	Stowell, H.	41	1,058	<i>St. Ann's Society's Schools.</i>		
Horsley, Bp.	39	978	.....	50	1,216	Melville, H.	46	1,169
Jackson, T.	50	1,221	<i>Protestant Operative Associations.</i>			.....	49	1,272
Melville, H.	35	886	Curling, W.	42	1,076	Stowell, H.	43	1,117
Sumner, Bp. C. R.	10	279	McGhee, R. J.	44	1,132	<i>Shipwrecked Fishermen's Society.</i>		
Wilberforce, Arch. S.	37	943	McNeil, H.	89	1,001	Burnet, Dr.	41	1,045
<i>Port of London, &c. Society.</i>			<i>Propagation of the Gospel in</i>			Lane, C.	41	1,008
Adams, Dr.	12	335	<i>Foreign Parts.</i>			<i>Sons of the Clergy.</i>		
<i>Prayer Book and Homily Society.</i>			Cole, H.	41	1,038	Benson, C.	6	169
Scholefield, Prof.	6	148	Gwyther, J.	27	681	Melville, H.	45	1,181
.....	28	710	Melville, H.	34	870	<i>Southwark Female Society.</i>		
Sidney, E.	37	941	.....	49	1,206	Weight, G.	47	1,222
Sumner, Bp. C. R.	14	381	Otter, Bp.	5	140	Jessopp, J.	49	1,375
<i>Prison Discipline Improvement</i>			Sumner, Bp. J. B.	24	607	<i>Stepney College.</i>		
<i>Society.</i>			Tomlinson, G. C.	27	692	Carry, E.	10	277
Cunningham, J. W.	8	225	Welburn, M.	34	868	<i>Strangers' Friend.</i>		
<i>Promotion of Christian</i>			<i>Religious Tract Society.</i>			Croly, Dr.	44	1,140
<i>Knowledge.</i>			Close, F.	22	566	Moore, D.	41	1,046
Wolff, Dr.	47	1,232	Parsons, J.	10	260	Noel, Hon. B. W.	42	1,087
<i>Protestant Association.</i>			Sibthorp, R. W.	13	258	Robins, S.	34	948
Birks, T. R.	48	1,264	Vance, W. F.	18	472	Warren, Dr.	2	39
Holloway, Dr.	33	825	<i>Sailors' Orphan School.</i>			<i>Trinitarian Bible Society.</i>		
McNeile, H.	35	878	Armstrong, N.	18	468	Goodhart, C. J.	26	659
.....	39	996	Noel, B. W.	40	1,013	<i>Widow's Society.</i>		
Montgomery, R.	38	952	Stowell, H.	43	1,117	Robins, S.	24	711
O'Sullivan, Dr.	36	967	<i>Scripture Readers Association.</i>			Ryder, Bp.	8	227
Stowell, H.	32	822	Harrison, J.	48	1,234	<i>Widow's Friend Society.</i>		
.....	38	967				Moore, D.	43	1,119

SERMONS ON THE PARABLES.

<i>Dives and Lazarus:</i>			Gregg, T. D.	20	530	<i>The Labourers in the Vineyard:</i>		
Harness, W.	1	4	Kirk, E. N.	34	851	Styles, Dr.	14	370
King, R.	39	980	Noel, B. W.	33	824	<i>The Sower:</i>		
Maude, H. R.	26	678	Thompson, E.	28	794	Borrows, W.	25	645
Melville, H.	31	784	<i>The Wedding Garment.</i>			.....	25	646
Vaughan, Dr.	5	120	Campbell, Dr.	11	292	Page, T.	24	574
<i>The Foolish Rich Man:</i>			Robins, S.	31	791	<i>The Seed in the Earth:</i>		
Noel, B. W.	36	906	<i>The Prepared Feast:</i>			Hambleton, J.	17	459
Phillip, R.	8	209	Borrows, W.	28	718	Wood, B.	1	7
<i>The Lost Sheep:</i>			Robins, S.	35	884	<i>The unjust Steward:</i>		
Eland, G. E.	36	914	<i>The Pharisee and Publican.</i>			Childe, C. F.	30	1,202
Montgomery, R.	35	894	Curling, W.	39	982	Croly, Dr.	30	721
Moore, D.	42	1,067	Gibson, T.	43	1,200	Dale, T.	46	1,200
<i>The Lost Silver:</i>			<i>The Good Samaritan:</i>			Stowell, H.	50	1,200
Montgomery, R.	35	894	Dillon, Dr.	13	342	<i>The Tares and the Wheat:</i>		
<i>The Prodigal Son:</i>			<i>The Pearl of Great Price:</i>			Robins, S.	33	848
Beames, T.	31	827	Noel, B. W.	38	951	<i>The Importunate Widow:</i>		
Binney, T.	44	1,139	Scobell, E.	13	358	Kelly, D.	35	895
Burnet, Dr.	31	794	<i>The Foolish Virgins:</i>			<i>The Marriage Supper:</i>		
Dillon, Dr.	9	233	Hughes, Hugh	35	843	Melville, H.	40	1,245

SERMONS ON MIRACLES.

<i>Lazarus Raised:</i>			<i>The importunate woman of</i>			<i>The woman healed by touching</i>		
Melville, H.	44	1,127-8	<i>Canaan:</i>			<i>Christ's garment:</i>		
<i>The deaf and dumb spirit cast out:</i>			Newton, R.	10	283	Noel, B. W.	24	614
Hunt, R. T.	1	9	<i>The ten lepers:</i>			<i>The tempest stilled:</i>		
Jay, W.	42	1,088	Jay, W.	40	1,016	Sedger, T.	36	907
<i>The pool of Bethesda:</i>			Gibson, T.	48	1,206	<i>Classification of Christ's miracles:</i>		
Blackburn, J.	2	35	.....	48	1,267	Watson, R.	15	410
McMullan, P.	26	656	<i>The leper cleansed:</i>			<i>The recovered Demoniac:</i>		
<i>The Paralytic let down through</i>			Harding, J.	22	568	Bridge, S.	47	1,240
<i>the Roof:</i>								
Jackson, T.	44	1,140						
Noel, B. W.	48	1,262						

SERMONS ON SCRIPTURE HISTORIES.

<i>Cain:</i>			Gibson, T.	47	1,224	Croly, Dr.	38	716
Jay, W.	35	962	.....	47	1,224	Dehson, J. P.	8	203
<i>Abel:</i>			Melville, H.	25	719	<i>Abraham offering up Isaac:</i>		
Bradley, C.	40	1,031	Morison, Dr. J.	7	201	Noel, B. W.	27	678
<i>Enoch:</i>			<i>Noah:</i>			<i>Lot's Wife:</i>		
Bridge, S.	43	1,100	Bradby, C.	44	1,131	Hambleton, J.	32	810

SERMONS ON POPERY—(Continued).

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
Croly, Dr.	36	910	Provision for sins after baptism:			Seymour, M. H. ..	41	1,051
McGhee, R. J. ..	45	1,184	McNeile, H.	39	1,001	Tradition:		
Melville, H.	44	1,144	Pope's authority:			Cuffe, T.	41	1,047
Stowell, H.	36	910	Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,040	McNeile, H.	44	1,136-7
Welburn, M.	37	926	The mass:			Peter not the Rock:		
England in danger from Popery:			Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,042	Barber, J. R.	41	1,050
Curling, W.	36	910	The Service at Mass:			The Idolatry of Popery:		
Seymour, M. H. ...	36	909	Seymour, M. H. ...	44	1,145	Stowell, H.	43	1,111
Invocation of saints.			Purgatory:			Reasons for leaving the Church		
McNeile, H.	39	996	Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,047	of Rome.		
Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,044	Transubstantiation:			Czerski, J.	50	1,305
			Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,049			

SERMONS RELATING TO THE JEWS: THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROSPECTS.

Chalmers, Dr.	25	650	McNeile, H. (Nine lectures on the			Saunders, I.	7	191
Curling, W.	50	1,322	prophecies relating to the Jew-			—	22	567
Dillon, Dr.	15	408	ish nation).....	9	242,	Smith, Dr. Pye ..	25	650
Irving, E.	6	149	246, 251, 254, 256, 257			Villiers, H. M. ...	50	1,318
McNeile, H.	4	105	McNeile, H. ("The			Wolff, Dr.	34	855
—	12	316	Jew First")....	42	1082-3			

SERMONS ON FESTIVALS, &c.

Advent:			Ward, T.	49	1,285	Lloyd, R.	8	211
Burgess, R.	50	1,321	—	49	1,285	Pratt, J.	14	375
Christmas day:			—	49	1,291	Seymour, M. H. ...	43	1,109
Clayton, J. jun. ..	34	859	—	49	1,294	Ascension day:		
Melville, H.	39	985	Good Friday:			West, F.	6	159
Oakes, E.	10	259	Benson, C.	14	375	Moore, H.	28	716
Robins, S.	32	799	Clayton, J. jun. .	6	157	Neville, W.	28	719
Seymour, M. H. ...	44	1,153	Dale, T.	34	871	Stainforth, F. J. ...	44	1,124
Sharp, T.	25	646	Horton, J.	48	1,252	Whitsunday:		
Stephens, J.	7	195	Melville, H.	30	757	Harrison, Dr.	6	238
Thompson, E.	40	1,034	—	39	997	Jay, W.	9	241
Watson, R.	7	195	—	49	1,286	Trinity Sunday:		
Wilson, D.	23	585	Noel, Baptist W. .	21	545	Melville, H.	19	502
Lent:			Styles, Dr.	12	320	[See also "Sermons on Doctrines."]		
Melville, H.	43	1,102	Easter day:			Lady day:		
Ward, T.	49	1,280	Griffith, T.	23	601	McCanl, Dr.	32	812
—	49	1,281	Jay, W.	38	951	Melville, H.	32	812
—	49	1,283						

SERMONS ON BAPTISM.

Dodsworth, W. ...	31	779	Mannel Dr.	2	36	Robins, S.	37	939
Irons, W. J.	32	811	Neville, W.	28	712	[For Baptismal Regeneration, see p. 31.]		

ADDRESS ON CONFIRMATION.—Blomfield, Bp. 12 329—[See also p. 25.]

SERMONS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Dale, T.	43	1,108	Heslop, R.	12	332	Pratt, J.	23	591
Dodsworth, W. ...	23	600	Leete, T. T.	37	945	Robins, S.	33	829
Hambleton, J. ...	48	1,249	Noel, Baptist W. .	7	200	Wilson, J.	50	1,320

SERMONS ON CONVERSION AND TO THE UNCONVERTED.

Aiken, R.	30	761	Kemp, R.	6	149	Noel, Baptist W. .	40	1,032
Alexander, J.	36	906	—	8	227	Parsons, J.	39	992
Dale, T.	42	1,068	Leifchild, Dr.	29	740	Seymour, M. H. .		
Deering, W.	13	359	Noel, Baptist W. .	35	898	(Means of)	44	1,143
Hamilton, R. W. .	38	961	—	36	900,	Stainforth, F. J. (to		
Hancock, W.	41	1,044	902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908,			the awakened) .	43	1,019
Herschell, R. H. (His.)	34	854	911, 913, 914, 915, 917, 918, 920,			Stewart, J. H.	1	5
Hitchen, T. (to the			921, 922, 924			Williams, J.	38	958
awakened)	39	987						

ORDINATION SERMONS.

37 Priests—Blomfield, Bp.	13	359	Giles, J. E.—{Collyer, Dr. }					
24 Priests—	16	411	—{Murch. Dr. }					
Cumming, J.—Brown, Dr.	20	521	—{Giles, W. }	15	405	Home Missionaries—Leifchild, Dr. .	20	527
Edwards, J.—{Steane, E.}	22	573	Jaquier, R. H.—{Smith, Dr. J. Pye }	12	315	—{Winter, Dr. }		
—{Upton, J.}			Leifchild, Dr. {Winter, Dr. }	16	431	—{Clayton, J. }		
—{Smith, Dr. J. Pye ..	4	93						
Evison, H.—{Smith, T.}	4	94						
—{Clayton, J. jun.}	4	95						

ORDINATION SERMONS—(Continued.)

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	No.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	No.
Reid, J.—Wardlaw, Dr.	12	337	West, Missionary—Sibrie, J.	33	838
Weight, G. } Foster, J. K.	20	308	Woodman, C. B.—Moran, T.	20	506
Butler, M. }					

SERMONS PREACHED ON ENTERING UPON A NEW CHARGE.

Burnet, Dr.—Garlickhythe	29	752	D. Moore, Camberwell Chapel	46	1,211
Burnet, J.—Camberwell	16	463	Mortimer, T.—Gray's Inn Lane	50	758
Dale, T.—Lothbury Lecture	30	984	Page, T.—St. Paul's Church	23	585
Dillon, Dr.—Clerkenwell Church	5	143	Palmer, W. S.—Horse-church Chapel	8	204
Ellaby, F.—West-st. Chapel, St. John	6	148	Shannon, J.—Surrey Chapel	28	728
Evison, Mr.—Chapin Chapel	3	77	Payne, W. R.—Ch. of St. Andrew, Scots Ch.	12	366
Garwood, J.—Wheeler Chapel	22	570	Thompson, E.—Charlotte Chapel	38	970
Gibson, T.—St. George's, Southwark	45	1,159	Townley, R.—White-st. Chapel	9	232
Letts, J.—St. Olave's	32	804	Weight, G.—St. George's, Southwark	53	1,372
Moore, D.—Christ Chapel	39	991	Williams, J.—Roper, J.	34	868

SERMONS PREACHED ON OPENING OR RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES OR CHAPELS.

Birt, L.—Salters-hall Chapel	9	246	James, J. A.—West-house Chapel	24	607
Blomfield, Bp.—St. Paul's Church, Ball's Pond	11	294	Jay, W.—Chapel, Mile-end	3	64
Bowers, J.—Liverpool-st. Chapel	26	675	—Tottenham Court	18	467
Chalmers, Dr.—Regent-sqr. St. Ch.	8	215	McDonald, J.—Scott's Ch., Islington	25	634
Clarke, Dr. A.—Gt. Queen-st. Chap.	9	244	McNeile, H.—West-street Chapel	8	212
Clayton, G.—Brixton-hill Chapel	12	328	Mortimer, T.—Shoreditch Church	11	301
Clayton, J. jun. Poultry Chapel	5	121	Noel, G. T.—West-street Chapel	18	212
Collyer, Dr.—Salters-hall Chapel	9	245	Parsons, J.—Chapel, Edmonton	78	229
Cooper, W. H.—Chapel, Edmonton	9	230	—Tottenham Court	18	467
Denison, Bp.—Trowbridge Church	34	872	—Falcon-square Chapel	42	1,079
Dillon, Dr.—Charlotte Chapel	27	683	Raffles, Dr.—Camden-road Chapel	40	1,288
Edmonds, C.—Chapel, Tottenham	7	184	Saunders, S.—Chapel, Tottenham	7	184
Fletcher, Dr.—Chapel, Mile-end	3	65	Sibrie, J.—Surrey Chapel	15	401
—Wycliff Chapel	17	454	Stephens, J.—Chapel, Edmonton	12	329
Gillbert, C.—Barnsbury Chapel	40	1,006			

FAREWELL SERMONS.

Aitken, R. (Zion Ch. Waterloo-rd.)	34	975	Page, G. (Egham Church)	33	845
Bickersteth, E. (Wheler Chapel)	15	414	Pemberton, A. G. (Kingsbury Ch.)	41	1,051
Chalmers, Dr. (St. John's Ch. Glasgow)	2	31	Reed, Dr. (Visiting America)	23	595
Collyer, Dr. (Pavement, Moorfields)	8	206	Robins, S. (Orphan Asylum)	24	624
Dale, T. (St. Sepulchre's)	45	1,181	— (Christ Church)	39	989
— (St. Bride's)	50	1,200	Seymour, M. H. (St. Ann's, Blackfr.)	43	1,109
Dillon, Dr. (Bedford-row)	2	38	— (St. George's)	46	1,186
Dixon, J. (City-road circuit)	24	621	Thompson, E. (Exit) (St. John's Wood)	34	906
Foskett, T. M. (Enfield)	47	1,229	— (Barnwick Chapel)	34	906
Hosketh, W. M. (St. Dunstan's East)	24	611	— (Pimlico)	47	1,242
Jeans, G. (Egham Church)	26	654	Thorne, Dr. (Lock Hospital)	20	504
Juck, C. (St. Bride's)	42	1,066	Tombs, J. G. (Richmond Church)	42	1,067
Mansfield, G. (Christ Ch. Liverpool)	42	1,085	Weight, G. (Collier's-rows)	23	599
Mortimer, T. (Shoreditch Church)	29	731	Wilson, Bp. (Bedford-row)	10	499
— (Clerkenwell)	29	737	Woolcock, T. (Wheler Chapel)	21	530
Newberry, H. J. (Christ Ch. New-gate-st)	25	637	Yate, W. (Missionary)	27	697
Noel, Hon. G. T. (Richmond)	20	522			

FUNERAL SERMONS.

Preachers.	Deceased.	Vols.	No.	Preachers.	Deceased.	Vols.	No.
Arundel, J.—Mr. Cranfield		34	834	Barber, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Harris		13	361
Baker, T. B.—Rev. J. Simons		28	726	Barber, S.—Rev. S. Crowthey		13	346
—Rev. W. Wilkinson		38	976	Barns, J.—Mrs. Bradshaw		13	359
Bateman, G.—Archd. Hutchinson		48	1,258	Campbell, Dr.—Mrs. Wilson		14	367
Bennett, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Jogue		5	136	Cartwright, J.—Rev. C. S. Hawtrey		17	436
Bickersteth, E.—Rev. J. Pratt		46	1,205	Chalmers, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Thomson		16	427
Binney, T.—A Young Minister		44	1,037	Clarke, O.—Rev. Dr. Ryland		5	118
—Rev. J. Clayton		41	1,139	Clayton, G.—Rev. Dr. Harris		13	360
Blackburn, J.—Miss King		19	482	—Mrs. Minchener		19	487
Borrows, W.—Mr. J. B. Wilson		25	617	—Rev. Dr. Winter		22	568
Borrows, W.—Rev. F. Goode		42	1,089	—W. Dickinson, Esq.		34	1,260
Bradley, C.—Rev. F. Goode		42	1,088	Clayton, J. jun.—Miss H. H. Cooper		5	130
—Rev. W. Hancock		43	1,121	—Mr. Canning		9	231
Broadfoot, W.—Rev. Dr. Waugh		9	250	—Four Ministers		14	380
Brown, W.—Rev. W. Thomas		9	237	—Mrs. G. Clayton		42	1,074
Bunting, Dr.—Rev. R. Watson		21	533	Collyer, Dr.—Rev. J. Brooksbank		4	106
—Mr. L. Haslope		32	821	—Rev. J. Townsend		6	150
Buntin, W. M.—Mrs. Bulmer		29	733	—Mr. T. W. Mansett		9	247

SERMONS ON SUNDRY SPECIAL OCCASIONS—(Continued.)

Occasions.	Preacher.	Vols.	No.	Occasions.	Preacher.	Vols.	No.
Close of the year—	Cooper, M.	34	857	Close of the year—	Noel, B. W.	39	977
	Hambleton, J. ..	25	637		Reed, Dr.	47	1,216
	.....	34	858	A new year—	Mortimer, T.	23	586
Jay, W.	43	1,094			Robins, S. ..	34	858
Melville, H.	32	800			Noel, B. W.	47	1,216
Moore, D.	48	1,270					
Noel, B. W.	36	919					

SERMONS ON SUNDRY SPECIAL SUBJECTS.

Affliction—Evans, J. H.	23	581	Egypt, destiny of—Blackburn, J. ...	38	974		
Jay, W.	39	999	Ejaculatory prayer—James, J. A.	1	23		
Thorpe, W.	22	560	Elijah's and Elisha's Deaths compared—				
Africa, claims of—Knibb, W.	37	946		Melville, H.	46	1,193	
Aged Christians—Blackburn, J.	4	101	Evil, God's mode of dealing with it—				
America, state of religion in—Potter, A.	17	457		M'Neile, H.	45	1,163	
Angels, their interest in redemption—			Falls of Christians—Evans, J. H. ...	36	915		
	Watson, R.	17	453		Green, S.	25	648
Antiquity, appeal to—Melville, H.	45	1,174		Kelly, D.	31	783	
Anxiety—Dale, T.	40	1,014	Famine—Hambleton, J.	50	1,313		
	Pratt, J.	33	839		Magginn, C. A.	50	1,315
Backsliding—Bridge, S.	41	1,064		Haslegrave, J.	50	1,315	
	Denham, J. F.	38	954		Jessopp, J.	50	1,315
	Kelly, D.	29	735		50	1,316
	Melville, H.	38	954	Fasting—Rodwell, J. M. ...	32	810	
	Parsons, J.	19	490		M'Neile, H.	46	1,203
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